

HOWARD KIMELDORF INTERVIEWS FOR *REDS OR RACKETS*?
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INTERVIEWEE: GERMAIN BULCKE

INTERVIEWERS: HOWARD KIMELDORF

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[00:00:00] **HOWARD KIMELDORF:** And, before we get into actually your history, why don't you spell your name so I don't ever make any mistakes when it's in print.

[00:00:07] **GERMAIN BULCKE:** My real name is GERMAIN, G-E-R-M-A-I-N. Last name is Bulcke, B-U-L-C-K-E.

[00:00:17] **HOWARD:** And now, why don't you give me just a very brief summary of your experiences in the longshore industry, and then we'll move on to specific kinds of questions.

[00:00:26] **GERMAIN:** As I say, I started work here in May of 1925 as a longshoreman. I've been a longshoreman and an official of the union ever since that time. I served eight years, that is two years in and one year out, as president of the local here. In 1947, I was elected International vice president, and I served in that

capacity almost 14 years. Then, by the request of the employer and the International, I accepted the position as an arbitrator. I had the four southern California local ports. That is, Hueneme, San Pedro, Long Beach, and San Diego. I was the arbitrator there for some six years.

[00:01:20] **HOWARD:** When was that?

[00:01:21] **GERMAIN:** From 1960 to 1966. When I reached, not quite, but almost 65, I decided that I wanted a few years without any pressures, and I retired. Since then, of course, we have an organization of retired members called the Pacific Coast Pensioners Association. I've been active in that organization ever since. I was their secretary-treasurer for three years. I'm on their executive board. Of course, I'm also on the executive board of the local club of that organization. We have a membership meeting of the pensioners once a month, and we have then an executive board meeting once a month, which is two weeks apart. Once a year, we have a convention, which is always held in Anderson [California], which is near Redding [California], where we have pensioners from up and down the coast attend, and where we adopt positions on things. Not only for us pensioners and members of the union, but on broader political things that affect us all.

In that sense, I keep active. I attend quite often, when the International board meets here, I generally attend the meetings. Of course, they're open to any member, for that matter. I keep as close to things as possible because I'm interested in it. Like I pointed out at the last negotiations, I was requested by the International to sit in as an observer representing the pensioners. Well, I never took the floor in the meeting and in the committees jointing it, but generally I would confer with the members of my committee in the sessions of their own, or they would ask me questions. 'What did you do in this situation,' and so forth.

You see, I've been on the negotiating committee, I guess, well, ever since we started. After the 1934 strike, the strike was settled by a committee appointed by President [Franklin] Roosevelt. We testified before them; they finally came down with the ruling. That was my first experience. Then, later on, I was on the negotiating committee—in fact, I think I only missed one I didn't attend. Otherwise I've been in every negotiation, all of it. All of the years from 1934 on.

[00:04:32] **HOWARD:** Before we get into the specifics of those years, I've got a number of questions. I'll just sort of go through these things chronologically. Before I get to that point, though, I wanted to lay out, briefly, the purpose of my research so you can sort of see where you fit into it and keep that in mind as we go through the interview itself. I think I may have mentioned to you on the phone that, generally, I'm doing a comparative historical analysis of the ILA [International Longshoremen's Association] with the ILWU [International Longshore and Warehouse Union]. The specific focus is trying to explain their different, almost antagonistic political trajectories, at least from around World War I, the early twenties, through the modernization/mechanization sort of agreements that arise in the late fifties and early sixties. One set of questions I have is sort of the basic assumption of this research, that in fact there's a difference between unions under left leadership and unions under more conservative, business-type leadership. Now, based on your experience, this isn't something that you can answer yes or no on, obviously, but do you think there's a relationship between the ideology of union leaders, or their politics, and the kinds of practices that the union engaged in?

[00:05:39] **GERMAIN:** Well, the ILA was—when we originally organized in 1933, we joined the ILA, rather, we requested a charter. There had been a company union here. The 1921 strike of the longshoremen and seamen was lost. This is before my time. But in talking to the then old timers, they set up a company union; it was known as the Blue Book. It has no political meaning, but the old organization prior to that, the book happened to be red. In order to differentiate this company union, they had been able to convince two or three of the former

leaders of the old union to form this company union. And the covers of their membership books were blue. It was generally known as the Blue Book Union on account of that.

So, that was a company union controlled by the company. As far representing the workers is concerned, it didn't represent the workers. It represented the companies. You had to belong to the Blue Book Union in order to work as a longshoreman. Well, many longshoremen, myself included, at times we would try to avoid to pay dues to that company union. In those days, it was 75¢ per month. Of course, that sounds very little now, but it meant something. Particularly because we all knew that they didn't represent the worker.

What would happen is this: when a ship would come in where they would be using quite a number of gangs. The business agent of this company union would show up and go through the company and get a list of the gangs and their names and check his records. If he found Joe Blow [slang for a hypothetical average person] in there that hadn't paid any dues for maybe five or six months, he would then catch him and say, 'look, you pay up or else.' You got fired. If you got fired, they had a very effective blacklist. In other words, if you got fired from one company for non-payment of dues, you tried to go to work for another company, you had a hell of a time getting a job.

[00:08:11] **HOWARD:** Let me see, then. The company actually took the initiative in firing people?

[00:08:16] **GERMAIN:** No, no. The business agent of the union, see, would get the list from the company.

[00:08:24] **HOWARD:** Ok, so there was collaboration.

[00:08:26] **GERMAIN:** Oh, yes, and naturally it was in the company's interest to keep the guys quiet and see that they didn't squawk and accepted any and all conditions. One of the things that was used, and I did it myself, is when the business agent would catch up with you, you'd say, "Look, I've been gone for three months." There was a lot of drifting in those days. He would say, "All right, you go to a notary public, swear that you've been away that long, and pay two months' dues." And [you would] get reinstated. This sort of thing would happen all the time. As I say, that's briefly what the conditions were in those days. That you either had to pay up or else you didn't work.

Then, in 1933, they had cut our wages, prior to 1931—I might be off—prior to that, they were paying 90¢ per hour straight time, and \$1.10 overtime. In other words, there was 20¢ difference between straight and overtime. Then they cut our wages to 75¢. Of course, the Depression hit, too. There was less ships; there was less cargo. The unemployment being as bad as it was, the waterfront was flooded with people who had never worked before. But you couldn't blame them; they were trying to get a job. The Matson Company was an outstanding one here. The Matson Company, same as most companies, they had a certain number of steady gang that regularly worked there. But when they had two or three ships in, which happened quite often, they would have to hire additional gangs. At Matson, they would have a man. He would stand out there; there's probably a thousand longshoremen out there, and he go, "You, you, you, you," pick out men. He might pick you for this particular ship; the next time he wouldn't look at you. It was a regular slave market. That was the worst, Matson. Other companies, of course, when they needed extra gangs, would make their regular gang foremen, each gang has a foreman, and they were all known foremen, who was known through the company for having capable men in his gang, would have a preference to get work. That's who the men would try to work, in that kind of a gang. I worked steadily for one company, the Grace Line, for seven years.

[00:11:33] **HOWARD:** Were you in the star gangs?

[00:11:34] **GERMAIN:** Yeah. That was the star gang. Well, you see, they had five steady gangs there. When there was two ships, they needed maybe 12 gangs, 15 gangs, depending on the size of the ship. Naturally, on days that there was no ship in, we would then have our foremen try to get a job from steamship companies that had ships in, see? That way, you worked all over the waterfront for different companies. The gangs became known, naturally, because of their ability to handle that type of cargo, whatever. The gang foremen, most of them—not all of them, but many of them—were ex-seamen or winch drivers. They had experience, and they became known as a good gang. Naturally, when they were available—and, of course, the foremen would keep track. In the newspaper, you knew when ships were coming in, and we used to meet on days that we didn't work at our regular place, we met right across on the corner of Market Street and Embarcadero, right across from the ferry building. There was most of the gangs would meet with the foremen. Also, lots of times, it would happen—see, these gangs were not necessarily up to the limit of men you needed. Depending on the job, you more or less men. So, once you got to know certain foremen, you'd show up there, and he'd say, "Hey, Gerry, you working today? No? Well, I got a job for you at such-and-such dock. Pick up a partner." Or, "Have you got a partner?" Or, if you only need one man, he'd say, "Well, you want the job?" He'd give you the order to go there. This is how they worked. This is prior to the ILWU coming through.

[00:13:35] **HOWARD:** How did you become a longshoreman? What led you down to the waterfront?

[00:13:38] **GERMAIN:** Well, I'll tell you. It's a little bit amusing in the sense. I was living in Detroit [Michigan] ; I was working in automobile factories. Actually, see, I was born in Belgium. I came over in 1920, and I went to Detroit because I had friends there. Well, the thing in Detroit then was, naturally, automobile factories. That was right after the First World War, and it was really difficult to get a job because there was a lot of unemployment. But I managed to get a job, and I worked in different plants. A friend of mine—he happened to be a Belgian, too, for that matter—he'd been here for a quite a number of years. He was gone for a while, several months, I remember. Actually, I was living with my brother-in-law and sister, and he was a good friend of theirs. He dropped in one day, and we got to talking. I said, "Where you been?" He says, "Oh, I've been in San Francisco [California] ." "What kind of work do you do there?" He said, "I work on ships." "What do you do on ships?" "Oh, you know, load cargo, unload cargo." Well, I always had a hankering to come to California. Had an aunt of mine that had traveled through the years, and I'd seen a lot of pictures of California. At the time I wasn't too happy where I was working. I was married and had a wife and one child at the time. So I said to him, "If I came out there, you think there'd be a chance to go to work where you work?" He says, "I think so." It was 1925. He left a few days later, and he gave me his address. [inaudible] _____.

So I came on out and looked him up. He took me down to the Admiral [Line] . Because, I understand, it was on the Pacific between Seattle [Washington] and Los Angeles [California] there were quite a few ships. So he pointed out the superintendent and said, "That's the guy you have to ask if there's any chance of work." So I did. Walked up to him, and I said, "What's the chance of coming to work here?" He looked at me, and he said, "You ever worked as a longshoreman?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Where?" I said, "In Detroit." There, they're completely different ships, you see. He looked at me; he said, "Well, they have different ships here." I said, "I realize that." "Well, at least you know the difference between a ship and a streetcar. Be here at eight o'clock in the morning." That's how I got started. Oh, the next thing he said, "But you have to join the union." I said, "Fine." You know, I didn't know it was a company union. Went up there and joined up. Showed up the next morning and started to work. I stayed there about eight months, I think, seven or eight months. By that time, I got acquainted, I got to find out all the various things. Started what we called "prospecting," meaning trying to go to work for another company. Getting to know people. That's how I got started. Same as probably thousands of others! That's how I got started in longshoring.

[00:17:23] **HOWARD:** How many longshoremen would you estimate were here in the mid-twenties in San Francisco?

[00:17:27] **GERMAIN:** It's hard to tell because there was a great deal of floating going on. Never been able to get any correct figures on it myself because, as I say, there were a lot of longshoremen. Many of them were seamen that would ship out for a while and come back. If things were busy on the waterfront, they'd probably stay around for a while. So I would judge, based on later years, I imagine at that time on the Pacific Coast there were probably around 20,000-25,000 of them working longshoring.

[00:18:15] **HOWARD:** Twenty-five thousand?

[00:18:16] **GERMAIN:** I mean, on the coast. Because that's the days that they didn't have all this mechanization. It required manpower, and everything was hand-handled. You had no mechanical equipment at all. Even when I first started, when you were loading cargo, you had a flat truck and a board on it. You would make up your load and drag it to the side of the ship. Later on then they started having jiffies, those little, you know, and they'd hook up to a three-loads. Again, that was probably the first mechanization process, you see. Also, of course, bulk cargoes, for instance. I'll give you an example of sugar coming from the islands. Now, in Hilo, Hawai'i, when they were still shipping sugar in sacks, the local had somewhere around 800 members. They mechanized it to where it's all done in bulk. They got 80 members in Hilo. But the same amount of sugar moves. We used to discharge the sugar—we still do—at profit per tonnage when it was in sacks. We used to have 18-men gage discharging the sugar, making it up into a load, and taking it to the dock, and putting it in the warehouse. Now, they have a suction system. The sugar is poured in in bulk and gets there. There's four men in the crew, that's all. So, I mean, you can multiply this. The same with the grain. We used to go and pack barley, ship barley—a lot of it's still being ships—it was all in sacks. Now it's all bulk. It's poured in and sucked out. You don't need but just a few men, that's all. You got it out with the suction machine and a couple men down there to clean up.

[00:20:25] **HOWARD:** Was bulk cargo a very large proportion of shipping—

[00:20:28] **GERMAIN:** There was a lot, yeah, a lot of bulk cargo.

[00:20:30] **HOWARD:** What was that?

[00:20:30] **GERMAIN:** Well, besides grain and sugar, you had bones, for instance. Shoveling. Then there was certain types of . . . Can't think of the name of them. Came from South America.

[00:20:50] **HOWARD:** Weren't bananas handled that way? I know they weren't—

[00:20:50] **GERMAIN:** No, bananas, we'll get to that. But I'm trying to think of the doggone . . . We used to shovel the stuff. I mean, there was a lot of bulk cargo of various kinds. It came in in bulk. You were shoveling into an iron tub. Pushed it out and dump into boxcars or, when those went away, whatever. But it required a lot of hands.

Now, bananas, for instance. Bananas used to come in in stalks. I handled a lot of them. You picked the banana stock up and carried it through a conveyor to be boxed, and from there it was put into boxcars. Now bananas come in boxes already cut into hands. There's no more stalks. And it's handled just like any other. They have conveyors. The guys down below just throw it on a conveyor, and they go right into the warehouse. It takes a number of men, but nowhere near the number of people when they were handled in the old system. Matter of fact, I guess the only place where bananas from in now is in San Pedro. They used to come here [San Francisco] . They don't anymore because, see, they can ship it quicker, faster, by discharging it there and by truck or whatever way they move it. No bananas coming through on ships anymore.

[00:22:39] **HOWARD:** Let me ask you some questions now about that earlier period because that's really critical to a lot of the arguments I'm making. One of the arguments I'm making for instance is that the Wobblies were much more a stronger presence on the West Coast among longshoremen than they were on the East Coast. You have any sense of whether that might be true?

[00:22:56] **GERMAIN:** Yes, that is true. You had not only the Wobblies, but you also had the miners. People that worked the mines would also drift down, and they—the miners were very well organized.

[00:23:15] **HOWARD:** Which miners are these now?

[00:23:17] **GERMAIN:** I'm talking about the coal miners from Montana and other chemicals. Copper mines.

[00:23:30] **HOWARD:** Like hard rock mining? Western Federation of Miners?

[00:23:32] **GERMAIN:** Yeah. But, those people, they belonged to unions. They were much more aware of the need of organization than even the seamen were. There was a certain amount of organization among the seamen, particularly European seamen. There were forms of organization there, unions. But the way the waterfront operated with this floating population, you might say—things were slow, well, guys drifted away. Only a hard core of those that stayed and had some background or knowledge of the need of the union were eventually—and, yes, there were a certain group of Wobblies who were naturally aware of the need for organization, and a certain amount of seamen who had belonged to unions. Who were working as longshoremen. So that those people naturally more aware and desirous of forming a union than others there would be.

I'll give you an example, for instance. When I first worked on the waterfront—I was probably here a couple, three months—they had a habit at the Admiral Line of 18 steady gangs that worked there regularly. Each gang had a number, starting at one up to eighteen. They would have a little blackboard with the number, show up there what time you go to work the next day or if there was work. Lots of times I was in gang five; see five—seven a.m. Ok. you show up at seven a.m., and they would write backwards, "Smoke." It means, "Stand by." You didn't get paid, you see.

[00:25:52] **HOWARD:** What does that mean?

[00:25:53] **GERMAIN:** Well, your gang was there, you were available, but you didn't go to work.

[00:25:58] **HOWARD:** So you were on a standby basis.

[00:25:59] **GERMAIN:** You were on a standby basis, but you didn't get paid.

[00:26:01] **HOWARD:** Until you actually went to work.

[00:26:03] **GERMAIN:** Yeah.

[00:26:03] **HOWARD:** Which you might not.

[00:26:04] **GERMAIN:** Well, what happened was generally this: at eleven o'clock, they would send the gang to lunch. You go and relieve that gang for an hour. Then, at twelve o'clock, another gang would go to lunch. Go and relieve that gang. Then you smoke again until five o'clock. Maybe you get another hour. But you were there for ten hours, and you got three hours' pay.

After three or four months of that, I was talking to some old-timers who'd been there many years, and I'd say, "Hey, what about this smoke business?" I'd gotten a hold, when I joined the so-called union, I got a little book that had all the working rules in them. It said nothing, nothing in there about smoke. So I said to these old-timers, "What about this business of smoke?" "Yeah," they says, "isn't that the dickens?" I said, "Yeah." They said, "Hey, you're a young guy. Why don't you go up to the union meeting and raise it?" I said, "Yeah." It didn't occur to me why they didn't do it. I was p.o.'ed [pissed off] because I didn't like this thing, and sitting around only getting two hours, and the whole day was gone. Where, if I hadn't had the work, I could have probably gotten a full day's work someplace, maybe.

Anyhow, I show up at the membership meeting of this so-called union. Besides the president and the secretary, there was a few business agents. There were, I think, about 8 people there. So-called executive board members. They were working longshoremen, all right, but most of them were gang foremen, too. So they go through taking the role and reading the minutes and correspondence. Finally, the president said, "Does anybody here have any questions?" "Yes, sir, I have." "Yeah? What is it?" I explained the situation about the smoke business. The business agent, called by the name of Weeks—I got to know him later on. Nice mind, but he was the business agent of this phony union. He was getting his wages; he didn't give a damn. Quite a drinker. He gets up and says, "Well, you little son of a bitch, you trying to tell us how to run? How long have you been in this union? What do you know about it?" He grabbed me by the back of my neck and the seat of my pants, and he shoved me down the steps. Didn't throw me, but he actually gave me a push. The next day when I was on the job, or the day after, the old-timers that I talked to said, "Well, how'd you make out?" And I told them. They thought it was very funny. That was way back in 1925. From that day on, I figured out more and more talking to old-timers that what we needed was a real union.

[00:28:52] **HOWARD:** Why didn't the old-timers try to make improvements in the union? If they did en masse—

[00:28:57] **GERMAIN:** I'll tell you, that's hard. I've never been able to—I've talked to these guys. Some of them, most of them, had been on the waterfront for years. Had been in the old union. Most of it was because of the blacklisting abilities of the companies. They were afraid to speak up. They had families. While they grumped and growled about the lack of conditions and the speed-up, which kept getting worse and worse, they actually didn't move. When we started talking about—well, it was after 1932 when we first . . . On the President Line, there'd be two ships, a lot of gangs. Then lunch hour, you start talking to one another. Doggone, gotta do something, get a union going. I mean, they talk real well, but then when, under Roosevelt, when they passed Section 7[a] [of the National Industrial Recovery Act] that allowed [. . .] and others I can't recall. Anyway, we finally decided that the thing to do was to apply for a charter from the ILA. We did and got a charter. We got it in 1933. We started organizing. A lot of it was done by longshore [inaudible] _____. For instance, I worked at the Grace Line at the time. There was five steady gangs there. Well, I joined quite early.

One thing that—whoever thought of it, it was a smart idea, though I don't think it was intended that way—there was four guys that were entitled to issue books. They did not issue a book below 1000. In other words, starting with 1000 in order to have no duplication. The next guy to have the right to issue books would start with 2000, and so on. But actually the result of it was that, I remember myself, my partner, I'd been working with the guy three or four years. He was married and had little kids, and he was scared. He was afraid that, you know, you join the union, there could be a strike, you lose out. It was a lot of fear. Work in those days wasn't too plentiful. There was a certain amount of fear. By June, I had joined the union, but I had been unable to go to a union to be initiated. But I was initiated there in August. So I showed my book around. My book number was 1358. So, he looked at my book. I hadn't thought of it. He said, immediately, "My god, there's 1358 members!" Must think it was the next number up. Well, later on we had to redo them, but it was somebody's idea not to issue one below 1000. I don't think he had in mind. It was just one of those things that happen. But it actually resulted in more

guys joining, thinking that there was that many members. Truthfully, it didn't take too long. I couldn't put any timing on it, but by the end of '33, I think that probably 85-90 percent of the longshoremen who worked regularly on the waterfront had joined the union, the ILA. The local just automatically folded up because there was nobody that could do anything with it. We started to have regular membership meetings and drawing up demands and so forth.

We had our first convention, that is the delegates from the various locals up and down the coast, here in San Francisco in January, 1934, where a set of demands were drafted to be presented to the employers. Well, the employers at first wouldn't meet with us. Then, they did eventually meet but one of our demands was of course less contract seamen at the port. We asked for a six-hour day, meaning six-hours straight time and then overtime. We asked for \$1 per hour. We were getting 75¢ [per hour] . We asked for a union-controlled hiring hall.

[00:34:16] **HOWARD:** Now, what was the source of that demand?

[00:34:18] **GERMAIN:** Because of the favoritism that was being shown by companies to certain gangs, that they called "star gangs." Although I worked in one. But most of them, if you could, good, because you had more steady employment.

[00:34:32] **HOWARD:** That's what I never understood. It seems like most of the most active members in forming the union were members of the star gang, and the ones who benefitted from that favoritism.

[00:34:41] **GERMAIN:** Well, they benefitted, but at the same time they were exploited. You see, you couldn't make enough working for one company. It's true, you had that benefit. On the other hand, you felt you were restricted, too. They drove you more, and it got worse and worse, the speed-up.

I'll give an example for this. On the San Francisco port at that time, there were two Black gangs.

[00:35:15] **HOWARD:** All-Black gangs?

[00:35:16] **GERMAIN:** No, they were not all-Black. There were Chicanos, Peruvians, but they were not white. Mexicans. But there was a certain number of Blacks. I understand—I've never been able to check this, whether it's true or not—in the 1930 and 1921 strike, the employers used a lot of Blacks as scabs. Now, understand me, I've never been able to verify this in any records, but I've heard it enough, often believed it. They agreed, when they set up this company union, longshore-wise, they agreed there'd be two Black gangs on the waterfront in San Francisco. One was at the Grace docks, and one was at Luckenbach docks. As I say, they were not all Black, but they were non-white. Matter of fact, I got well acquainted. I worked with them all, and knew the guys. The winch driver, by the way, happened to be 100 percent American. He was [inaudible] _____ reservation; he was an Indian, an American Indian. He had sailed and learned how to drive winches. As far as the individuals were concerned, they were all right. They were not the same guys that scabbed in '21.

[00:36:34] **HOWARD:** Now, was it '21 or '19?

[00:36:35] **GERMAIN:** No, '21—

[00:36:36] **HOWARD:** There was the longshore strike in '19 also.

[00:36:39] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, but the company union was set up in '21.

[00:36:42] **HOWARD:** It was. Ok.

[00:36:43] **GERMAIN:** Yeah. So, I remember talking to these guys. Of course, I knew them all. We were all together, and we had no animosity or anything.

Let me explain was the company superintendents would do. They'd come over to our hatch. We always worked the same hatch in certain ships. They'd say, "Hey, what's the matter with you sons of bitches? That goddamn Black gang over there is ten ton ahead of you. If you guys intend to stay here, you better get with it." Then they go to the Black gang and say, "Hey, you Black bastards. If you expect to stay here . . ." Well, we knew this was bullshit, but this is the sort of things that they did. And they would do this even if there were no Black gangs. This is one of the speed-up methods. "You've been here some time. If you intend to work, your production's way down! Come on, let's have it." They would just ask you constantly and continually. Even though you were a steady gang. So the pressures were really up.

As I said, when we were organizing, I talked to these guys in the so-called Black gang. They were worried. They said, "Look, we know what happens. If we join the union, we're going to have a strike. When the strike is over, you're going to kick us all out. You won't have us." We said, "Nuh-huh. This union is not going to be that way. There's going to be no discrimination. We're not going to be that way." Only one man of the two gangs scabbed in '34. Only one man. Who stayed in. Of course, when the strike was over, he disappeared, naturally. Because everybody knew him.

[00:38:37] **HOWARD:** Now, there were other non-whites who scabbed in the '34 strike.

[00:38:42] **GERMAIN:** Yes, there are, but—

[00:38:43] **HOWARD:** Only one from this union—

[00:38:45] **GERMAIN:** Only one that was a member of the longshoremen.

[00:38:47] **HOWARD:** Ok.

[00:38:51] **GERMAIN:** Well, there was a few guys that work longshoring but not joined the union who scabbed. Of course, they all disappeared when the thing was over. Matter of fact, we had a little problem. Two of the guys, they were members of the union, and we went them in to scab. To keep us advised what was going on.

[00:39:11] **HOWARD:** Is that right?

[00:39:12] **GERMAIN:** Yeah. After it was over with, we had to explain to our rank and file that the guy was all right, that he was our informant.

[00:39:23] **HOWARD:** Were these both Black people that were sent in?

[00:39:25] **GERMAIN:** No, neither one of them was Black.

[00:39:26] **HOWARD:** Two union members then were sent in.

[00:39:27] **GERMAIN:** Yeah. Matter of fact, what they used to do, they would tick us off when the scabs were coming ashore. I'll give an incident. The reason I know is because I was part of it. I was picket captain in '35 and '37. That's where the Grace Lines were. We had a roving patrol that would drive up and down, see if things were wrong. Our informant had notified the union that the group of scabs were coming off. They had hired a water taxi, and they were going to land at Hunter's Point, which was then a very desolate place. The only thing

that was there were the Chinese shrimp fishermen—of course that's all gone now. A bunch of us went down there. Of course, there was nothing down there but grassy hills. Nothing around. We hid ourselves, of course. We parked our cars where you couldn't see them. Sure enough, around eleven o'clock at night, there came this water taxi. It circled around for maybe five or ten minutes. Eventually, it pulled alongside one of the little Chinese shrimp docks. Of course, they piled off. I guess the water taxi man didn't like it either. As soon as he got rid of these guys, he backed out and away he went. We jumped all over these guys, took their money, and beat up on them. Not so badly beaten up, but took their money away. My partner and I were working one over, and doggone it, you know, he didn't have any money in his pockets at all. His cap had fell off. My partner was so mad that we didn't get anything that he kicked the guy's cap. Money fell out of the cap—\$82.

[00:41:29] **HOWARD:** That was a lot of money!

[00:41:33] **GERMAIN:** Yeah. We had an unwritten rule: if you took any money away from a scab, you took half and gave half to the soup kitchen. We had a soup kitchen. That's just a little incident.

Well, anyway, the National Guard was called out. On the fifth of July, the police killed two of our members on Steuart and Mission Street. Our hall, the union hall, was on 113 Steuart Street, just off of Mission Street. One block off the Embarcadero. On July the third 1934, it was being headlined in the paper that they were going to open the dock. They were going to open the port. So we got it that Pier 38—that's just about where the Oakland Bay Bridge was being built, that's Lincoln Hill. I guess 400 or 500, maybe 800, I don't know, didn't count them. Of course, the seamen were on strike, too. Seamen and longshore got up there to see what the hell. Of course the police was there in force.

So they drove a flatbed truck out of Pier 38 with some sacks of rice on it. We start hurtling bottles and whatever we could find. The police fired at us and threw tear gas bombs and shot through them. They were about that long and this big around. They had tear gas things they would shoot. When it would hit the ground, it would explode. One of them hit my leg and burned my leg a little bit. I had my gloves on, and I picked it up and threw it back at the cops. [inaudible] ____ We got chased off the hill three times. The third time we couldn't get back up again. So we landed in various directions. My partner and I jumped—we ran towards Third Street. That's where the trucks went. They went to a warehouse on Third Street not very far from the [?expedido?]. The Teamsters [International Brotherhood of Teamsters], although they were not on strike, they were giving us—Teamster drivers, the waterfront drivers, they were giving us support. They had hired scab Teamsters to drive these trucks. So the Teamsters assisted us in dumping these things. My partner and I jumped on one of them. I was on the back end of a flatbed truck. We hit the sacks of rice off, and, when they hit the ground, rice all over. A little coupe with two ladies in it is kind of stuck next to this truck. I very carefully laid a sack of rice on top of their car; they must have been surprised when they got home.

I'll say this much, among the police, there's a group who saw this and they didn't interfere with us at all. Of course, the Teamsters were helping us. They were dumping trucks. Turning them over on their side, yeah.

[00:44:52] **HOWARD:** Why were the Teamsters so supportive of you guys? I know historically there's always been cooperation. Is that the reason?

[00:44:58] **GERMAIN:** Many Teamsters also worked as a longshoreman sometimes.

[00:45:02] **HOWARD:** Is that right?

[00:45:02] **GERMAIN:** Yeah. Not only that, sometimes their fathers were longshoremen. Their brothers were longshoremen. The rank and file of the Teamsters was in wholehearted support of this, although the leadership

wasn't. These guys, when they heard that they're going to open the port and they knew damn well that no—the Teamsters were on record not to cross the picket lines. So nothing went down to the docks, and nothing came out. When they hired these scab Teamsters, it was only a gesture really. They were going to open the ports to show that everything was lovely. If I ask, half a dozen trucks were dumped around Third Street there and on the waterfront. I know one Teamster, he finished a flatbed, and he came along there. He could see the gasoline, and he said, "Goddamn, beautiful!" And he threw his cigarette and lit the whole thing up. The rank and file Teamsters were with us. The leadership wasn't. It was very much, "Communists" or "Reds" and all this kind of baloney.

Anyway, that was on the third of July. On the fourth of July, everything was lovely. National holiday. On the fifth of July, I was picket captain, and one of my duties was to collect the picket cards from my gang and take them up to the union hall and have them—they punched holes with a number to see that a guy did his duty. You were on six and then off twenty-four. In other words, you start six in the morning, you got through at noon. Next day start at noon, through at six, and so on, but a twenty-four hour picket line.

I had an old Model-T Ford, 1924 model, which I had bought off of a seaman that shipped out. I was coming along Mission Street to go to the hall to have this car [?scunched?] . I was due on the picket line at noon. I'd gotten off the day before and started again at noon. I got near the corner of Steuart and Mission, coming down Mission, towards the ferry building. I noticed one of my tires was damn near flat. I could feel it. There was a service station around the corner of Steuart and Mission, on the opposite corner. I drove in there. In those days, you had an air hose. I jacked up the wheel, and all of a sudden I hear shots. I looked up, and it was right across the street from me. Right on the corner of Steuart and Mission. There's, not a police car, a plain car, not a marked car. I see two cops, each with a rifle in their hand, get in their car and away they went. Across the street, I see people running. I run over there; here's three guys laying. Two of them are dead. One of them was crawling. I put him on my back. A couple of guys carried him upstairs, around the corner, up the second floor of the hall. There's already 18 or 16 guys there, beaten up, some of them shouting. The cops just cut loose—there was no picket line there. No ships there or anything.

[00:48:32] **HOWARD:** Wasn't there a protest that had been called by the Young Communist League or something?

[00:48:35] **GERMAIN:** Oh yeah, there was a protest by them and others. See, the only paper that supported us was the Communist—

[00:48:41] **HOWARD:** Western Worker—

[00:48:42] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, whatever the name was. Western Worker, something like that. That was the only paper that supported us. Of course, the other papers, the Chronicle, the Examiner, the Bulletin, and whatever the hell we had. The News and the Forum. They were all anti-union. And actually, hell, their support came from business people so they couldn't. Well, once in a while, of course, there were individual newspaper reporters who couldn't do much but tried to. Even some of the police were very much [sympathetic to the strike] , but they individually couldn't do much.

For instance, I'll give an example. After the strike was on maybe a week, they didn't allow us to picket the front of the docks. We had to picket the cross, back of the railroad lines. That's where we set up our overnight, even built little sheds and shacks and stuff.

So, at Pier 35, at Pier 37, we were across the street, at the corner of Bay Street. There's a fire boat stationed there. Now the firemen let us know, "Now, you guys, we can't do much but, any time you want to come over,

have a cup of coffee and donut, come over.” The lieutenant in charge—we used to kid the police. They were on twenty-four hours; we’d say “You need a union and do six hours,”—the lieutenant in charge one day hollered real loud. He’s standing in front of the dock, on the gate of the dock. Hollered real loud, came halfway across the Embarcadero, “Who’s in charge over there?” I happened to be on duty, picket captain. “I want to talk to you!” His voice, you could hear him for two blocks. I thought, what the hell’s the matter with that so-and-so? I walked over, and he said, “How often have I told you guys only two at a time to go over there?” He says [quieter] , “There’s two scabs coming now. They don’t get in here.” He says, “We can get ‘em off the street.” [louder] “And, I’ll tell you now, you know . . .” And he turns around and waves his arm. So, fine and dandy.

Sure enough, within a few minutes, here comes a yellow cab, but it doesn’t cross the picket line. They wouldn’t; the cab drivers were supporting us. They wouldn’t go across the picket. Two scabs come out of Pier 35, and they had to walk across the street to get in the cab. In the meantime, my partner and three others got into my car, and we drove down Bay Street. We knew that’s the way to get out of sight of the police. In those days, Bay Street was nothing. There were a few old lumber yards. That’s all. So we went down about three blocks. When the cab came along, I drove the cab to the curb and told the cab driver to hold up. He went, “Don’t hit me! Don’t hit me!” Of course, he knew damn well we wouldn’t. So, we dragged those guys out, took their money, and beat up on them. Pretty soon, you could hear—of course, then the cab driver drove off. We gave him \$5, and away he went. Pretty soon, you heard bing, bing, bing! Here come the ambulance to pick up the guys. They weren’t badly beaten, but, you know, bloody noses and stuff like that.

So, there were some incidents like that. And, of course, some of the policemen, their brothers were longshoremen. Their fathers were longshoremen or had been. There was the policymakers, and that was a completely different thing.

[00:52:34] **HOWARD:** You make it sound as though a number of various working class occupations were tied into the longshore scene in some way, either by family members—

[00:52:49] **GERMAIN:** A lot of it by family.

[00:52:49] **HOWARD:** —or past experiences or something.

[00:52:52] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, well, you take for instance, I imagine this taxi driver. The taxi drivers’ union—because they were organized—they gave us \$1000 per month out of their treasury to help us buy food. See, we ran a soup kitchen. By the way, one of the guys who was killed, he was volunteering as a cook.

[00:53:13] **HOWARD:** [Nick] Bordoise.

[00:53:13] **GERMAIN:** Bordoise, right. He volunteered and was just coming back to the hall. They had given him a picket card to show that he was on duty, and he was walking back to the hall. Cold-blooded murder.

[00:53:31] **HOWARD:** So that was completely unprovoked—

[00:53:32] **GERMAIN:** Oh yeah. There was nothing going on.

[00:53:34] **HOWARD:** —the shots on those two?

[00:53:35] **GERMAIN:** Sure, our union hall was there on the second floor, but there were no ships there, there was no picketing. There was nothing moving there except people going to the hall. They had the mob of cops there. They wouldn’t allow a seaman to enter those little hotels. They were on horseback. The guys would stand in the doorway. They’d ride right up there and beat the hell out of him. They weren’t doing anything. Nothing.

Another time, that's where they tested tear gas. One day, before that, I forget the date, we noticed there was quite a gathering. In those days, the ferry's still coming from Oakland [California], you know. Which is right across the bridge from Mission Street. So we see a lot of gathering of cops there. What the hell is going on? A lot of them. We stopped by the hall. I was on the strike committee. We had meetings. There was always guys coming and going. So we walked to the end of Mission Street, the Embarcadero, to see what the heck is going on. All of a sudden, they start shooting tear gas out at us. We found out later on, a guy by the name of McCarthy—he had nothing to do with it, but he was a salesman for the tear gas. He was showing the police how effective these things.

[00:54:48] **HOWARD:** I remember reading about it, yeah.

[00:54:51] **GERMAIN:** Well, at any rate, eventually, of course, President Roosevelt appointed—oh, first of all, Joe Ryan, who was the president of the ILA, came out. With the aid of the head of the Teamsters . . .

[00:55:17] **HOWARD:** [Michael] Casey?

[00:55:20] **GERMAIN:** No, not Casey, no. The head from Seattle.

[00:55:24] **HOWARD:** Oh, [Dave] Beck.

[00:55:25] **GERMAIN:** Beck. They reached an agreement. They didn't invite us at all.

[00:55:30] **HOWARD:** I know.

[00:55:31] **GERMAIN:** When Joe Ryan showed up at the meeting, he got run out of our hall. I mean, he got run out and went back to New York.

[00:55:40] **HOWARD:** Did you guys identify at all with the ILA? I mean—

[00:55:43] **GERMAIN:** The ILA didn't do anything for us, you see? In other words, we'd only been in the union, the ILA, for a short time, you know? We didn't like it too well because this was not our idea of a rank and file union. They want to appoint all of the officers and stuff like that. So we weren't too happy, but it was the only thing we could do at the time. We had to have a real union, that was recognized. But, instead of helping us, he was selling us out. So, we chased him out, and, shortly after that, of course, President Roosevelt appointed this committee, arbitration board. I testified before them a couple times.

So we agreed to go back to work on July thirty-first 1934, under the old conditions. [inaudible] _____. While this committee was holding hearings here to determine, and our demands to say basically union recognition, coastwise agreement.

[00:56:56] **HOWARD:** Why was that so important to you?

[00:56:56] **GERMAIN:** Coastwise agreement? So they wouldn't work one port against the other. That's what the employers wanted to do.

[00:57:05] **HOWARD:** Ok, that makes perfect sense to me. I've never understood why New York never went that way.

[00:57:09] **GERMAIN:** No, of course not. They got all kinds of conditions in every port that don't apply to other ports. What that results in is that the union members themselves become competitive against one another.

So our demand was coastwise agreement. Union recognition first, coast-wise agreement, six-hour day, and a union-controlled hiring hall. The upside of it was, we got the coastwise agreement. We got the six-hour day. We asked for \$1 per hour; we got 95¢. We got a joint-controlled hiring hall. But the union selects the dispatchers, so in effect we control the hiring hall. You know what I mean.

[00:57:58] **HOWARD:** So when the men went back to work, after the strike, they agreed to go back under the old conditions, pending arbitration.

[00:58:05] **GERMAIN:** Right.

[00:58:05] **HOWARD:** Now, didn't that sort of seem as sort of a defeat to the workers?

[00:58:08] **GERMAIN:** No. Because we realized our strength, and we started putting conditions in effect, the hell with the contract. For instance, they used to work us around the clock. I put in many, many 24- and 30-hour stretches. We refused to work anymore than 12 hours.

[00:58:27] **HOWARD:** Do you think that the sort of job actions that were taken had an effect on the decision that was handed down by the arbitration committee, or not?

[00:58:34] **GERMAIN:** I don't know that it did or not because the testimony—and I testified twice—had to do with conditions that existed prior. A lot of these things, they were not aware that we were doing it.

[00:58:46] **HOWARD:** Oh, they weren't.

[00:58:47] **GERMAIN:** No, for instance, we worked 12 hours and said to the company, look, we're not going to work anymore. Well, what was he going to do? Get another gang, that's all he could. He couldn't let the ship sit idle. Also, another thing that we did: there was a lot of unsafe conditions that we corrected. On the job itself. They couldn't quite argue against that. Before that, if you raised a question, you got fired. Another thing we did, too, is we found out from the crew that one of the crewmembers had scabbed. We'd tell the company, "Get rid of that guy, or we won't go to work." It was effective, and it worked. We had a few incidents like that, but it didn't affect the decision of the arbitration board at all. Well, what the hell, it was easy to prove what the conditions were and had been. It was the speed-up, and the rate of injuries was climbing. They realized that something—after all, they had a progressive administration at the time, at least favorable to the recognition of a trade union. It must have been 1938, I think. Whatever it was, I was president of the local at the time, I know that. Headline's in the paper here, "The guy's name's Bulcke." That was—

[01:00:23] **HOWARD:** And what was your capacity? Were you president of the local?

[01:00:26] **GERMAIN:** I was president of the local at the time.

[01:00:27] **HOWARD:** Oh, you were.

[01:00:28] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, I was president of the local at the time.

[01:00:29] **HOWARD:** Were you the first local president of Local 10?

[01:00:30] **GERMAIN:** No, no. [Harry] Bridges was the first.

[01:00:32] **HOWARD:** He was first.

[01:00:33] **GERMAIN:** During the strike—can't think of the guy's name. There was another guy.

[01:00:37] **HOWARD:** [Lee] Holman or something?

[01:00:38] **GERMAIN:** No, we got rid of Holman. He went south with some money. We threw him out during the strike, no, before the strike. Then, Johnson was his name; he was president.

[01:00:51] **HOWARD:** Who is he? Or, who was he?

[01:00:52] **GERMAIN:** He was a longshoreman.

[01:00:53] **HOWARD:** Nothing distinctive about him?

[01:00:53] **GERMAIN:** No, an ex-seaman. A decent sort of a guy, but really, administrative abilities were nil.

[01:01:03] **HOWARD:** Why was he put in that position as opposed to Bridges or somebody like that?

[01:01:05] **GERMAIN:** At that time, Bridges wasn't interested in it.

[01:01:08] **HOWARD:** Oh, is that right.

[01:01:08] **GERMAIN:** No, and then, when his term was up—see he was elected president during the strike. We threw Holman out before the strike, and this guy fell in. When the strike was over, when his term was up, Bridges was elected president. Then, when Bridges became CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations] director, after we joined the CIO, then Henry Schmidt became president of the local. Under the rules, when Schmidt's term was up, I was in. Then Schmidt followed me, and so on. Anyway, that's how it worked. When I say with the two-year rule, you're in and out.

[01:01:49] **HOWARD:** Let me ask you some questions about your own political position within the union.

[01:01:52] **GERMAIN:** Yeah.

[01:01:52] **HOWARD:** Would you say that you're a member of the left wing of the union, to the extent there is one?

[01:01:58] **GERMAIN:** I would say so, yes.

[01:01:58] **HOWARD:** But you were never in the Communist party?

[01:02:00] **GERMAIN:** No.

[01:02:02] **HOWARD:** Sympathetic to it generally?

[01:02:03] **GERMAIN:** Well, the only paper that supported us was the Western Worker, whatever the name was. And they told the truth, as we saw it. What happened on the waterfront, what was going on. They generally supported us. To my knowledge, only twice did a guy get up in our meeting saying that he was a member of the Communist party. A member of our local.

[01:02:33] **HOWARD:** Had to at least be Archie Brown and a couple of others.

[01:02:35] **GERMAIN:** Archie was one, and another guy by the name of B.B. Jones, Ben [B.] Jones. But he's since left the party. There may have been, oh no doubt, others but it was never in the union meetings. Never came up. The reason that Baby Jones stated—someone attacked the paper, or the party, I forget which. And B.B. said, "I'm a member of the party. We don't do that sort of thing." He made it public that he was a member. But it was general knowledge in the union that there were members of the Communist party in our union. But they never tried to take over, and they never tried to dictate.

See, the one thing that's the secret—I say "the secret," it's not the secret. The reason our union has been so successful is we do have real rank and file control. We don't have appointed officers. We have secret ballot elections. There's no ballot box stuffing.

[01:03:42] **HOWARD:** International, though, it does appoint officers, right?

[01:03:45] **GERMAIN:** No.

[01:03:45] **HOWARD:** No?

[01:03:46] **GERMAIN:** The only thing they appoint is regional directors.

[01:03:48] **HOWARD:** Ok. yeah, that's right.

[01:03:49] **GERMAIN:** And they serve at the pleasure of the officers, and they make regular reports on it. We've had to lay off sometimes if the rank and file in their area, if they find that this guy's not doing the job he should. They'll let the international know, and the guy's called in. He's told either fly right or else. I'm aware of two of them that were discharged for not attending to the job. In all the years, that's all I know. Two of them. One was up north, and the other one was back east. We used to have locals back east, but we gave them up during the war.

Anyway, Sam Yorty,¹ who you should know, and [Jack B.] Tenney²—when Yorty was first in the assembly [California State Assembly], and Tenny, they were both real progressives.

[01:04:46] **HOWARD:** Yorty was?

[01:04:49] **GERMAIN:** Yes, Yorty was. I'll give you an instance. I can't remember the exact year, but the gold miners were on strike in Grass Valley [California]. This must be way back in '37, to the best of my memory.

[01:05:08] **HOWARD:** Would have been Mine Mill Union [International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers] ?

[01:05:09] **GERMAIN:** No, no. Oh, yeah! They belong to Mine Mill. They were on strike against—you know, they live in company houses. I was in Sacramento [California] for some reason. Oh, I know, stopped in to talk to the guy from the railway brotherhood, and I had a check for \$500 that my local had donated to give to the strikers as they were having a meeting in Grass Valley. I went into the assembly to talk to not necessarily Yorty, but he happened to be there. We got to talking. I had met him before. He was sort of supporting some of the

¹ Sam Yorty was a California politician who held various positions in government throughout his career, most well-known for being mayor of Los Angeles in the 1960's. Yorty began his career as a liberal Democrat but his politics shifted in the late 1930's to being staunchly anti-communist and predicated on white racial fears.

² Jack B. Tenney was a California politician best known for leading the California Senate Factfinding Subcommittee on Un-American Activities to investigate suspected communists in California. Tenney began his career in 1936 as a Democrat and supporter of Franklin D. Roosevelt, and became a Republican in the early 1940's.

stuff that we were for. I was telling him I was on my way to Grass Valley for this purpose. He says, "Can I go with you?" I said sure, getting an assemblyman to go. So, sure enough, we get to Grass Valley. Before we get there, the state police stopped us under the supposition that it wasn't very healthy to go to Grass Valley because there'd be trouble, blah blah blah. Scaring people off. So Yorty threw out his little chest and said, "I'm Assemblyman Yorty; you're not going to tell me where I can't go." "Oh, sorry, sir." You know. So, anyway, he made a big fighting speech, and he told those people, "Look, if they throw you out of your houses, the thing to do is take your family and move down to Sacramento and camp around the park there." And they did.

[01:06:38] **HOWARD:** Boy, did his politics change. Wow.

[01:06:39] **GERMAIN:** Oh yeah! I mean, so, anyhow that was Yorty at that time. Now later on, of course, he became a congressman and turned phonier than a \$7 bill.

[01:06:54] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[01:06:54] **GERMAIN:** Anyway, I'm out of office, one of the in-between. Tenney took over the little [?dice?] committee that Yorty had started. Now, I knew Tenney pretty well, again, another guy that went phoney. I used to belong to the Labor's Non-Partisan League, the executive board. He was a member of it. We used meet; I knew him very well. So, here I got subpoenaed with Bill Schneiderman, who's the secretary of the Communist party. Or he was.

[01:07:28] **HOWARD:** Is he still around, by the way, Schneiderman?

[01:07:31] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, he's very sick. I just heard. He's been inactive for years. I hadn't seen him for a long time.

Anyway, I got subpoenas me. Headline of the paper, "Bulcke and Schneiderman Subpoenaed." Tying to two together, you see. Schneiderman was called first, and he got off with a written statement. Then I'm called. Tenney points to Schneiderman and says, "Do you know that gentleman?" "Yes, I do." "Where did you first meet him?" I said, "You should know, Jack." He says, "Don't call me Jack. Either 'Assemblyman' or 'Chairman.'" I says, "Sorry, Jack, I'll keep that in mind." "Answer the question." "What's the question?" He has the recorder read back, and I said, "Well, I answered it." He says, "You answered it?" I said, "Yeah. I told you, you should know." "What do you mean by that?" "Remember the last time you ran for re-election? I was down south, and you asked me to take you to the warehouse local, the ILWU warehouse local? And I did; I made a speech for you. On the way back to the hotel, you said to the driver, 'Let's stop off at the Communist headquarters. They control a lot of votes, and I want to talk to them.' And you introduced me there to Mr. Schneiderman."

And you could have heard a bomb drop, you know! He said, "Well, ahem, we'll have a 5-minute recess." So I walked out in the hallway for a cigarette. He comes out, "Gerry, for Christ's sake, there's nothing personal in the matter. I'm with you." I said to him, [inaudible] _____. I turned around, and pretty soon of course I went back in. The session started. "No further questions."

[01:09:18] **HOWARD:** What an opportunist. What year was that?

[01:09:20] **GERMAIN:** It must have been '39. Getting so that dates . . .

[01:09:29] **HOWARD:** Well, I don't blame you. You've been around long enough to forget the dates, that's for sure. It was before the war, though, right?

[01:09:45] **GERMAIN:** Yes, it was.

[01:09:53] **HOWARD:** What are your own political leanings, if you don't mind telling me. Are you a socialist?

[01:09:58] **GERMAIN:** No, I am registered, of course, as a Democrat.

[01:10:02] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[01:10:03] **GERMAIN:** I also was very active the time that the—what the hell party was it?

[01:10:22] **HOWARD:** The Progressive Party?

[01:10:23] **GERMAIN:** Yeah. I was a delegate to their convention. I registered the time that the former vice president ran for president.

[01:10:34] **HOWARD:** [Henry] Wallace.

[01:10:35] **GERMAIN:** Wallace, yeah. Wallace and [Glen H.] Taylor. I went to their convention in Chicago. Of course, they didn't make it. After that was over, I re-designated Democrat. That's about the size of it. But, you know—

[01:10:54] **HOWARD:** Well, you certainly don't have just mainstream Democratic politics, right?

[01:10:57] **GERMAIN:** No. But, at the present time, what else is there?

[01:11:01] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[01:11:02] **GERMAIN:** You know what I mean?

[01:11:02] **HOWARD:** Well, I guess the reason I'm asking you is because you held a number of offices in Local 10.

[01:11:06] **GERMAIN:** Yeah.

[01:11:07] **HOWARD:** One of the issues in my research is trying to understand why you, or Bridges, or any other people in the left wing of the union, were in the position. Is it because you represented a social movement to these guys? Or you were just aggressive trade unionists?

[01:11:18] **GERMAIN:** I was a little of both. In other words, we've always taken the position, politically-wise, while we were not members of the Communist party, we knew that the Communist party supported us in our endeavor. Other groups did, too. Also, of course, we supported causes that are liberal and progressive and been outspoken about them. Our membership knows and does know where we stand. We make recommendations, and we base them on what we feel would be good for the trade union movement. Not only our own local, or our own organization, but what's good for trade unions anywhere, everywhere.

[01:12:09] **HOWARD:** And you would say that the majority of members agree with your stance on those issues?

[01:12:12] **GERMAIN:** I would say, yes, they do. That was always—as I say, you don't get re-elected unless the membership feel that—they don't always agree with you, but you're working with a progressive idea to better conditions, not only of yourself, but of the labor movement generally.

[01:12:30] **HOWARD:** Ok, I have two questions. First of all, most anti-Communist scholars say that you guys were re-elected despite your politics. They say you delivered the pork chops [reference to “pork-chopper,” meaning here that Bulcke, et al. provided tangible benefits for the workers] , and the politics was irrelevant to the workers. And, in fact, they would go even further and say that the workers didn’t agree with you politically, but they tolerated your politics because it didn’t interfere with your collective bargaining.

[01:12:48] **GERMAIN:** No, I’d say, you can’t deny the fact that we were successful in collective bargaining. In spite of any political situations. Generally speaking, I would say that the reason the membership supported us, and Bridges particularly, who was more attacked than anybody I’ve ever known, is because he always let the membership know where he stood on issues. Whether they agreed with him 100 percent is not the question, but they knew that he was honest. And that the projects or the program that we projected had generally in mind that it would be better for us to follow that kind of policy, regardless of coloration, you might say. We never maintained that the Communist party was the answer or communism was the answer. But, on the other hand, we didn’t deny that some things they stood for we also agreed with. That doesn’t necessarily make you subservient to their policies, but we didn’t condemn them because they were communists any more than we did—if we felt that their policy was good for the rank and file, for the working stiff, we supported it. We’ve had communist leaders address our meetings. Sure they projected their position, but we felt that there’s nothing wrong with letting the rank and file hear them, make up their own minds about whether or not they serve them and was good or bad for the working stiff, for the working man. I guess that’s probably the reason why Bridges was always re-elected.

[01:14:31] **HOWARD:** Well, then, was it Bridges’ politics or his honesty? There’s a difference.

[01:14:34] **GERMAIN:** Both.

[01:14:35] **HOWARD:** Because you could be conservative politically but very honest.

[01:14:38] **GERMAIN:** No, well, Bridges, of course, he admitted years ago that he joined the IWW [International Workers of the World] , was a member of them. To the average rank and file, they know that that was a progressive union—it was eventually run down, but the policies were right. Harry’s always maintained he never belonged to the Communist party. I’m quite sure that’s true, although they tried to frame him on it but it didn’t work.

[01:15:07] **HOWARD:** But Bridges claimed—I mean, he always talks about the need for fighting for socialism—

[01:15:13] **GERMAIN:** Yeah.

[01:15:14] **HOWARD:** —so, he identifies himself, I think, quite clearly as a socialist or someone who believes in the socialist form of government.

[01:15:19] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, but not necessarily with the Socialist Party that existed.

[01:15:24] **HOWARD:** Of course not.

[01:15:25] **GERMAIN:** That’s what I mean.

[01:15:26] **HOWARD:** Ok.

[01:15:27] **GERMAIN:** He had his socialistic—but not in that sense. There's a difference in belonging and being controlled by, or follow, instructions from a political group.

[01:15:38] **HOWARD:** Yeah, I understand. So were workers voting—sorry to be pushing on this issue, but it's critical to the research—

[01:15:43] **GERMAIN:** No, no. Go ahead.

[01:15:44] **HOWARD:** I mean, the vast majority of writings on the American working class says that this working class is uniquely apolitical. It has no interest in politics, and the only guys who get elected are the ones that deliver the goods. It could be a Joe Ryan or a Harry Bridges. The reason Bridges was there is because he delivered more goods than Joe Ryan. That's true, but I'm saying there must be something more.

[01:16:03] **GERMAIN:** Well, the difference is a big difference. Joe Ryan, as we know, was re-elected because of the control they had within the organization. Most of their officers are appointed. A lot of them—we know that to be a fact—were working hand in glove with ship owners to keep the wages down.

[01:16:29] **HOWARD:** The workers knew that, too, so why didn't they get rid of them?

[01:16:32] **GERMAIN:** But they don't vote for those guys. Their conventions are handpicked delegates.

[01:16:37] **HOWARD:** That's true.

[01:16:39] **GERMAIN:** See, there's the big difference. Our conventions, the delegates are elected by the locals by secret ballot. Not in the ILA. A few that are probably go-along guys that have promises of getting a good job, but most of them are appointed. Ninety percent of their delegates are appointed. Who are they appointed by? By the force that's in. Naturally, the question of being re-elected was not there, it's no problem.

In our union, that isn't true because there's been opposition to Harry at different times. People have run against him, or, as they used to put it, also ran. But, the way it's done, in the convention—and the convention's delegates are elected by the locals. Under the constitution there's a certain number they're entitled to. They can elect as many as they want, but there's a certain number, based on per capita, that certain number of votes. Comes down to nominations for the top officers. The convention will narrow it down for two for each job. In other words, say there's four of them nominated for president. They'll narrow it down to two. That's done by the delegates at the convention. Those two then go on the ballot coastwise.

[01:18:19] **HOWARD:** What's the purpose of narrowing the list down to two?

[01:18:22] **GERMAIN:** Well, this is the way the constitution—that's in order not to split up the locals too much.

[01:18:27] **HOWARD:** Yeah, I see.

[01:18:27] **GERMAIN:** We didn't want a ballot with 17 names on it. Generally, the guys that ran for the job were good guys and all, but when the rank and file weighed the experience and the leadership of Bridges versus the guy that may have been the president of the local . . . [engine noise]

You're going to get a kick out of this. In 1945, the then-vice president of the ILWU—so you'll get the picture here. There used to be a rule in the International that in order to be nominated for one of the top—there's only four: president, vice president, secretary-treasurer, and organizational director. In order to be nominated for one

of those International positions, you have to be elected by your own local as a delegate. That sounds good. In other words, at the international you can say of a fellow, if the local doesn't have faith enough in him, fine. Well the guy that was vice president at the time, Rosco Craycraft—he was from Local 8 of Portland [Oregon] , but his office was in Seattle in those days. For years now, all the offices are here. That started when we were in the ILA; that's where the ILA's secretary-treasurer was, and then the first vice president of the ILWU had their office in Seattle.

In his work in that region, he very seldom had a chance to go to Portland. When the election came up for delegates to the convention, in 1945, he wasn't elected by his local. Now, the guys that ran hadn't been running against him, but he wasn't around. It wasn't that they had anything against him; they didn't. It just simply was an honest election. The guy didn't get enough votes. They elected whoever it was, I forget, eight or ten delegates, and he didn't make it. So, at the convention, everybody realized that this was not nice. But the guy had done an excellent job, nothing anybody could complain about. '34 man, and he'd been secretary of his own local. His record was terrific. He helped organize the Canadians, and all that. Wonderful record, but all his time spent up there. Of course he's pissed off at his local. I don't blame him. Frankly, goddamn it, he says, after all these years, I don't even have enough standing to elect me.

So we changed the constitution to allow him—and the constitution is still that way now—that it should have been if you have served a full term as an officer, you automatically can stand for re-election in order to wipe that thing out. But Craycraft was so damn mad at his local, he refused. He refused to run. So I declared myself as a candidate. At that time, we still had three locals in the Northwest that were still ILA: Tacoma, Port Angeles [Washington] , and the ship clerks in Seattle. They had stayed with the ILA; they had not joined the ILWU. So thus it was our desire to have them come in and join us. We had worked at it and hadn't made it. When in the convention I let it be known that I was going to be a candidate for what was then second vice president. First vice president was the director of organization, and now they call him different. Harry and a couple others called me and said, look, we'd like to have Mike Johnson. [He was from the ship clerks. Very capable guy.] We'd like to have Michael in for the job. As a clerk, he'll have more influence convincing the clerks in Seattle to join the ILWU than you would as a longshoreman. I saw that; I said, well, ok, alright. No problem. I agreed. So I didn't run. Well, Mike was elected. One problem with Mike, he was an occasional gas hound. He goes to Seattle, gets everything lined up. The night he's supposed to show up, he gets drunk and doesn't show up.

But, anyhow, Mike just served the two years and didn't run for re-election. So, in 1947, I declared myself again. I'll be darned if a guy by the name of Cole Jackman, actually a good friend of mine—he was from Portland. He was on the coast committee. About two weeks before the election, he told me, "Gerry, sure glad you're running, and I'll give you all the help I can." Blah, blah, blah, blah. Now, about two weeks before that, or about a week earlier, he comes to me. "Gerry, I hope you don't misunderstand, but I'm also going to run." Well, we're a democratic union, nothing personal about it. I says, "Hell, good luck to you. But I'll do my best to win, and so will you, I guess. Do you mind if I ask why? Why all of a sudden?" He says, "Oh, Harry's put the heat on me." I says, "What!" He says, "Yeah." I says, "I'll be goddamned."

So I go and I see Harry. What the hell business, what cooks here? I says, "I stepped back two years ago, and I think justifiably so. Now what's the matter?" He says, "Gerry, you're doing such a goddamn good job on Local 10, I want you to stay there." I said, "Look, Bridges, you were the president of Local 10. Why the fuck didn't you stay?" [Howard laughs] So he laughed. He got Cole.

There's a system. Cole Jackman and I were the two delegates, the two guys. There was a third guy, but he dropped by the wayside, and [inaudible] _____. By whatever way, pressure, the various locals in the preliminary election in the convention—now we were down to two—declared their favor to vote for this or that guy. So, Harry had been able to—no, I think it's [Louis] Goldblatt had been able to convince Local 6, which is a

large local, a lot of votes, to support Jackman. Also they had put the heat on the Hawaiian delegation. They had a lot of votes. They also supported Jackman. The result was on the ballot, the final ballot, most of the rank and file, it was Jackman and it was myself. But one of the guys from the Hawaiian local, I'd spent some time in Hawaii. I used to represent them in the executive board. A lot of them had been over here working with me. One of them came to me and said, "Gerry, don't worry, when we get to Honolulu, we're going to have another caucus. You don't have to worry. You'll get support." "Thanks." Sure enough, when the votes came in, I got 98 percent of the votes in Hawaii.

[01:26:15] **HOWARD:** Did you really?

[01:26:15] **GERMAIN:** Yeah. And I got the majority of the votes from Local 6. The plot didn't work! Well, Harry's position was a simple one. He was open. He said, "Look, I want you to stay in Local 10." Take your own crime. "Why the hell didn't you stay?"

Well, this is some of the asides, but what I want to point out is that, with all the pressure he had and all that, he could not. The guys knew me up and down the coast. After all, I'd been on the executive board for years. I'd been very active during strikes, was chairman of strike committees, and traveled up and down the coast. So I was not an unknown quantity either, and that makes a difference. Guys know, particularly the delegates to the convention—I'd been at every convention. I'd only missed one, and that was way back in '37 or '38. I was vice president of the local at that time, and Henry Schmidt was president. We had a rule that both president and vice president can't go, see? So that's the one convention that I missed in all the years. So I'd been at so many of the conventions with many of the guys, delegates from other locals, and in the convention hall was active on committees. Stuff like that.

[01:27:35] **HOWARD:** What was the basis of them supporting you again, if you can get back to that? Was it just that they knew you or that you were a militant trade unionist—

[01:27:44] **GERMAIN:** They knew me and also they heard my positions in conventions and travelling around. Even before I was a national officer, as a president of the local, I would attend conferences in Seattle and Portland or San Diego or San Pedro. I got to be known. I was known for being on the International board, particularly, for many years where we develop policies and adopt propositions that has to do with the good of the union. So that I was not an unknown, rather, you see, well-known because of that. When it came down to—well, an example of that is, I was elected in '47. I was re-elected each time I ran; I never had any opposition. Until the time that I resigned to take the job as an arbitrator, which was a very important thing to do.

Tell you what happened there. San Pedro local, rambunctious sort of guys. I mean, they're good union men. Our contract there, he wasn't an arbitrator but he was an attorney. He was on a retainer. Well, many times when they needed him, he was in court because his main line of business, after all, was being an attorney. So many times, there were a lot of work stoppages that frankly, no doubt, were not according to the rules. I mean, the locals there were rambunctious, you see. That didn't bother us too much, but all of a sudden—you see, the harbor of San Pedro belongs to Los Angeles. The county commissioners run it. There's competition between Long Beach alongside their own. There's competition between these two ports. Of course, as the longshoremen's concerned, it doesn't make any difference if it goes to both. The board of supervisors of the city of Los Angeles got tired of these work stoppages because some of the steamship lines were threatening not to go into San Pedro because of the delays that they were getting.

[01:30:03] **HOWARD:** Only in San Pedro, or in San Pedro and Long Beach?

[01:30:05] **GERMAIN:** No, no, not Long Beach. They had no problem with Long Beach.

[01:30:08] **HOWARD:** Why?

[01:30:10] **GERMAIN:** The work stoppages were occurring in San Pedro, not in Long Beach.

[01:30:12] **HOWARD:** Why were they only occurring there?

[01:30:14] **GERMAIN:** I don't know. Ninety percent of them affected only San Pedro.

[01:30:19] **HOWARD:** This was from '60-'66?

[01:30:21] **GERMAIN:** This is prior to sixties.

[01:30:22] **HOWARD:** This is earlier, around what? The question of work rules, re-divisions, and things?

[01:30:29] **GERMAIN:** I don't know. There were many work stoppages where the guys demanded things were not important to the contract.

[01:30:36] **HOWARD:** You don't know what the demands were though, obviously?

[01:30:38] **GERMAIN:** Oh, you know, more men, in and of themselves—but the result was that every time a beef like that occurred, they stopped working.

[01:30:46] **HOWARD:** These work stoppages only took place in San Pedro, not Long Beach.

[01:30:50] **GERMAIN:** Not in Long Beach.

[01:30:51] **HOWARD:** What's a possible explanation for that? They're all the same local down there.

[01:30:54] **GERMAIN:** I know, as far as the local's concerned, but, you see, the pressure on the board of supervisors—the board of supervisors of the city and county of Los Angeles were proposing to adopt a regulation that would make all harbor workers civil service. That meant the end of the union as far as a real trade union was concerned. Subject to civil service rules, you're all dead.

Well, Paul St. Sure, who was the president of the maritime employers [PMA] , was very much opposed because he could see all kinds of troubles. From where they sat. Of course, we also. Harry Bridges and Paul St. Sure appeared before the board of supervisors expressing their position on it, and they promised—up till then, they had this lawyer, and they liked his decisions, and he did a good job—they promised they would have an arbitrator that was knowledgeable and would be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. On that basis, the board of supervisors agreed to withhold any action for 90 days.

Harry called me, and I'll never forget it. He called me at home on a Wednesday night and said what had happened. I said, "Yeah, I'll be happy." We discussed, in our own office meetings, the need of having a full-time arbitrator. We hadn't gotten around to it yet. He said Paul St. Sure and himself hoped I would take the job. "Christ, Harry, I never had that in mind." I realized the matter of time involved here. I said, "How much time have I got to think about it?" Harry said, "I'll be in the office Friday morning." It was 11 o'clock Wednesday night. So, I talked to my wife. My wife was working at the time as a social worker. I told what it was up. She says, "You make the decision."

Well, I made the decision to take it, not because I wanted the goddamn job. But I could see that—that went through, any time we had an argument anywhere, in any port, whether the city administration or board of

supervisors or whatever, they would destroy the union. Now, I don't want to sound like a hero or a martyr, but this is the way I saw it. I wasn't worried about the job per se because I had the advantage of having worked as a longshoreman. There wasn't a job I hadn't done, from winch driving to shoveling to carrying sacks, what-have-you. Now, on the other hand, I had the background and knowledge of all the negotiations. I knew what the contract meant, better than the rank and file did, or better even than the employers did because their representatives had never worked as longshoremen.

Anyway, the result was that I took the job. The first couple of months, when I made a ruling against the union, I would get static back and say, "I wonder how much the son of a bitch got for that decision." If I ruled against the employers, I'd get static back saying, "Well, what do you expect? He's a member of the union." But that died away in a couple of months because, frankly, I had the advantage. The guys couldn't pull the wool over my eyes. I've done every goddamn job there is on the waterfront. Contract-wise, I'd been in every negotiation committee. I used to tell the employer representative, "Problem with you guys is you've never worked. Yeah, you read that book, but you read one sentence one way. But I have background knowledge." We tried to—and we do. When we write up the contract, we try to make the language as plain and as easy as can be. But still two people can read the same language, come up with a different conclusion.

[01:35:12] **HOWARD:** Sure.

[01:35:13] **GERMAIN:** So, anyway, the result of it was we had no more illegal work stoppages. I got called out and settled the beef, and that was that. The six years I was there, I made 1320 decisions. Some of them were not well-shaken, but . . . There's an appeal procedure. When an arbitrator hands down a decision, both sides must live up to it. But if either side doesn't like it, they can appeal it to what they call the coast committee, which is representative of both sides. If they don't reach a settlement, it goes to Sam Kagel, where's the top arbitrator.

[01:36:00] **HOWARD:** Kagel?

[01:36:00] **GERMAIN:** Sam Kagel. So I had 13 appeals, 8 by the union and 5 by the employers. They were all sustained. I never lost one.

[01:36:14] **HOWARD:** That's a pretty good record.

Ok, you've covered a lot of ground here. Let me just see where I am on my notes. Pretty much talked about the '34 strike, haven't we? Well, one thing I wanted to talk to you about, though, is how you would characterize the strike in terms of seeing it as—well, did a process of radicalization take place among workers? Or did they just view it as an ordinary trade union kind of struggle?

[01:36:44] **GERMAIN:** The '34 strike was, I would say, a desperation by the men to do away with the terrible conditions that had developed. The speed up, the long hours they had to work, the unsafe conditions. They were ready to do anything to get, to better their conditions. They were knowledgeable enough that what they required was an organization that they themselves would have a say in and not some guy sitting up on the top telling you, "This is it." In other words, they want the type of organization where their voice would be heard. Where, by honest majority votes, decisions would be made. Not from the top down saying, "That's it," but sharing with the top leadership, from the leadership all the way through the picture. From the lowest on up to the top. Not the top telling them what to do. In other words, a resulting decision coming actually by and through the rank and file.

And, sure, it is the duty, and naturally it must happen, that many of the recommendations come from the top. But they're based on experience, and they're based on knowledge that the average rank and file doesn't have the time to find out on conditions in other unions or jobs. In other words, you see something happening, that the

union is being weakened or what-have-you, try to avoid these kinds of things. But always basically, it's always been our position in leadership that we must have the understanding and participation of the rank and file. No ballot box stuffing. No appointing officers except regional directors, which are subject and have to answer to the locals that they supervise or assist or work with.

[01:38:42] **HOWARD:** How do you explain, though, the high degree of militancy or almost class consciousness that was occurring in the '34 strike? Is that simply that they wanted a union of their own?

[01:38:52] **GERMAIN:** The '34 strike, as I say, the men were pretty desperate. The conditions were so bad.

[01:38:58] **HOWARD:** Sometimes that can make you apathetic. And you give up. Like in the twenties, the men were desperate, too.

[01:39:02] **GERMAIN:** There was a certain amount of that, even in the '34. Of course, once the thing got rolling, there were guys in the local then that felt that it was a mistake to go on strike. Who felt that if they lost the strike, they were through. There was a certain amount of that, but not enough to weaken the strike. There were very few, in any of the ports, very few of the men that were working prior to the strike, very few scabbed. Most of those that did actually were not the longshore. They were the clerks. The clerks—they're different now, of course. They're all organized. They were not as active; not all the working clerks joined the union. They had a larger number that didn't join the union.

[01:40:08] **HOWARD:** Why is that? Sort of a privilege—

[01:40:10] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, most of the clerks, I wouldn't say all of them, got their jobs because they knew so-and-so up in the office uptown. That sort of thing. There was very few longshoremen ever became ship clerks until after our unions were established, and then we had an exchange. I would say that probably 99 percent of the clerks got their jobs through knowing somebody in the shipping office or in the uptown offices. It was who you knew and not what you know. So there was not the feeling—after all they were, to degrees, subjected to all that we were subjected to. They had to work long hours, too, but it wasn't physically as hard for them to work 24 hours than it was for a longshoreman packing a sack a barley for 24 hours, or bones and things like that. They weren't subjected to the speed up and hard working conditions, you see. So that was the thing.

[01:41:12] **HOWARD:** I was going to ask you, what about the role of violence in the '34 strike? How important was that, both from the standpoint of what the union engaged in and certainly what the state engaged against them, in sort of setting a tone to that strike?

[01:41:26] **GERMAIN:** Well, the violence that occurred, except for dumping of a scab here and there, but the violence was not by the longshore or by the seamen. It was by the police departments.

[01:41:37] **HOWARD:** Right.

[01:41:38] **GERMAIN:** In other words, now you know they called the National Guard. The violence that occurred was always provoked by the police, even when there was nowhere [that] the pickets were not doing anything. Picketing, you know. They were not attacking the guys who were working, or anything like that. Just to sort of catch them away from the job. In other words, we didn't storm into the—like in San Francisco, for instance. There were two ships, one at Pier 35 and one at the Matson dock that had the scabs aboard. Of course, the amount of work that they did was really—it didn't amount to very much. We soon realized that, too. The amount of cargo—that couldn't come off the docks, anyway. It was more of a gesture on the part of the employers that would say we can keep things moving. About the only ships that moved were the passenger vessels. A combination, but they handled very little cargo because, naturally, they couldn't get rid of the cargo.

If they got it off the ships, it stayed on the docks. That was that. So, actually the violence that occurred in San Pedro, that occurred in Portland, and in Seattle, it was always provoked by the police.

[01:43:01] **HOWARD:** You guys didn't pussyfoot around with the scabs, though, either, right?

[01:43:06] **GERMAIN:** Those are incidents, it was not—like I say, we were tipped off that a bunch of scabs were—that policeman informed me of a couple of scabs coming off. So what? It doesn't amount to much. The big batch that we got at Hunter's Point, that was because we had the informant inside.

The best part of it was the police car sitting up there watching the whole thing; they never appeared because I guess they felt the hell with the scabs, you see? But it didn't affect the result. It's temporary feeling of you got rid of a couple of scabs.

An outstanding one though, funny things occur. Some of them are real humorous. Someone had convinced the football team at Berkeley that this was a good opportunity to strengthen their muscles. I don't know that all of them did, but quite a few of them worked as scabs on either one of the two ships. So I happen to be at the hall when a well-dressed gentleman, obviously a businessman, was arguing with—we had a guy on duty on the steps letting everybody walk in. An Irish man named Bill Heard. "What's going on, Bill?" "Oh, this guy wants to go up and talk to the head of the strike committee. Goddamn, we have enough to do without . . ." he goes, rattling along. "Just a minute." I said to the gentleman, "What is it you want?" He said, "I've been trying to tell this man. My son goes to Berkeley." He's from Iowa or some place, not that it's important. "He's part of the football team. They're convinced that they should be working while there's a strike on. Now I'm not a union member. I don't believe in that. I want to have somebody take me there and get him out of there." I says to Bill Heard, "Ok, talk to some of the strike committee over there." I couldn't go in without them. I didn't have my car that day, and one of them did. So he drove us to Pier 35. We of course stayed out, and he went in. in about 15 minutes, he come out with his son. Got back in the car, and asked us to drive back to the strike headquarters, to the office, which we did. He takes his son upstairs and made him apologize to the few of the strike committee that was there, because it was the afternoon. Then he made a donation of \$500—

[01:46:15] **HOWARD:** Is that right?

[01:46:16] **GERMAIN:** —to our soup kitchen.

[01:46:18] **HOWARD:** Wow.

[01:46:23] **GERMAIN:** [laughing] Told his son, "Now, you go home. Go back to school."

[01:46:27] **HOWARD:** That's really strange, isn't it? Wow.

[01:46:31] **GERMAIN:** Amusing incidents.

[01:46:35] **HOWARD:** The reason I'm asking about the violence is because I've talked to a few other people. They said the effect of violence, mostly directed against the union men by the police in various ports—now I'm mostly talking about people in L.A.—they said it was devastating on many longshoremen.

[01:46:48] **GERMAIN:** Right.

[01:46:49] **HOWARD:** Afterwards a couple of them became alcoholics, trying to recreate why they engaged in these acts of violence against scabs, why it was done to them, trying to make sense of this whole period. It gave

me the impression that it was more or less almost a period of intense class conflict and guerilla warfare that was going on. It seems to me that the '34 strike was more than just an ordinary strike in many ways.

[01:47:11] **GERMAIN:** Oh, it was.

[01:47:12] **HOWARD:** And its impact continued for generations in molding workers' consciousness and their identity as longshoremen and the struggles they'd gone through. That's what I'm trying to get at.

[01:47:22] **GERMAIN:** Well, you see we had the only general strike that was successful in the United States. It's true, it only lasted five days. I'll never forget it because I was living at Twenty-eighth and Church, and no street cars were running. Nothing. Only a few restaurants were allowed to stay open. That was against—we had to fight like hell. We all belonged to the AFL at the time; we belonged to the labor council. I was a delegate. The leadership of the labor council at the time was opposed to the general strike. But the rank and file and the delegates to the council were not. Matter of fact, some of the unions voted prior to the labor council finally voting in favor of it; they'd already stopped working. It was the damndest feeling. I walked all the way from Twenty-eighth and Church to Pier 35. Not a street car. Not a store open. No mail delivery. Nothing. Everything was just dead. Sure, it only lasted five days. But it had its effect. Believe you me, there were signs all over, "Closed until the strike is won." Or, "We're in support of the ILA." Or, "Good Luck." On store windows.

[01:48:48] **HOWARD:** From shop owners?

[01:48:49] **GERMAIN:** Yeah.

[01:48:50] **HOWARD:** So they supported?

[01:48:50] **GERMAIN:** Oh, god, yes.

[01:48:53] **HOWARD:** Why would they do that, being business people?

[01:48:55] **GERMAIN:** Well, I tell you, of course a lot of it was on an individual basis. For instance, the grocery store I went to. He said, "Don't worry. Pay me after. If you need anything, don't go hungry." This happened to many of the guys. Same way with the . . . well, places of business. That was mostly on an individual basis, naturally.

[01:49:27] **HOWARD:** Because generally sort of small businessmen are among the most the most conservative.

[01:49:30] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, I know, but you see, you take many of—well, sure, the employers and those places, Macy's, they wouldn't. The small businessman lived in the working class district, realized that what was going on, and knew his customer for years, and knew damn well he may gamble a little, he's got credit, but eventually he paid. My landlord for instance. Of course, in those days rents were reasonable compared to now, but I remember I was paying \$25 per month. When I went on strike, I had \$23. So I couldn't pay my rent. So he said, "That's all right. One day you'll be back to work again." Matter of fact, during the strike, he said, "You know, your house needs painting. I'll get you the paint, you paint it, and I'll knock off a month's rent." Things like that.

Of course, on the waterfront itself, the restaurants the longshoremen generally went to—most of them gave out free meal tickets. I still have some souvenirs. They would bring them to the strike headquarters, and we would give them out. We had a soup kitchen, and we had committees going around begging and buying. We went up in the country to the chicken farmers, eggs. A lot of them donated food so that actually we didn't go hungry. We had days, time for the family, for guys who were married, to come to the soup kitchen. Or they could take food

home that was cooked. Also we helped people out if the landlord were adamant that they had to pay. We loaned them the money. The existing trade unions were supporting us. The taxis, the chauffeurs' union, \$1000 per week. They said they'd pay until the last cent was gone because they realized that this was not just a strike, in a sense, but an attempt to destroy. They would go down, and they knew it. The carpenters' union helped. The laborers' union helped. Various donations came in. So there was assistance enough to help out.

[01:52:21] **HOWARD:** I wanted to ask you also, it just occurs to me. You said that there were two ships that were being worked during the strike by scabs. What was the nature of the work? Because, right, they couldn't really transport—

[01:52:30] **GERMAIN:** There were two ships were they housed the scabs. [speaker's emphasis]

[01:52:33] **HOWARD:** Oh, where they housed them, ok.

[01:52:35] **GERMAIN:** They were supposed to work and did on ships that came in.

[01:52:40] **HOWARD:** What could they do? They couldn't—

[01:52:43] **GERMAIN:** Well, most of those ships that they worked on were passenger vessels, combination.

[01:52:46] **HOWARD:** Oh, ok.

[01:52:48] **GERMAIN:** They would take the baggage off. They would probably took off a little—well, the amount of cargo they moved is not enough to make any . . . They couldn't get off the dock anyhow.

[01:52:58] **HOWARD:** They couldn't take any exports off anyhow, right?

[01:53:00] **GERMAIN:** They couldn't no.

[01:53:02] **HOWARD:** Or anything in, really.

[01:53:04] **GERMAIN:** The docks really got clogged. On some instances, we allowed small businessmen to go on the docks and get their stuff. Because it would destroy them and they were not opposed to us. They weren't fighting us; they were just caught. They would go out of business because their stuff was sitting on the dock, and they couldn't get it. So we had what they called a special committee that would investigate these claims. If they proved them to be proper, we allowed them to go in. Generally, those businesspeople would then make a donation to the soup kitchen. It worked both ways. We tried to maintain a good relationship with the businesspeople because . . . There was one, we never knew who he was, but he'd come down in the evening. He was from the chauffeurs. Boxes full of sandwiches.

[01:54:06] **HOWARD:** Two questions before we leave the '34 period. This is taking longer than I thought, but I want to get a lot out of it. I hope you don't mind.

[01:54:17] **GERMAIN:** No, no, I don't.

[01:54:19] **HOWARD:** One is the role of the left in the '34 strike.

[01:54:21] **GERMAIN:** The what?

[01:54:22] **HOWARD:** The role of the left wing sort of, the Marine Workers Industrial Union and people like that. Was that significant at all?

[01:54:28] **GERMAIN:** It was helpful. No question about it. They didn't direct the strike, but they were assisting. They were helpful. Of course they folded up shortly after the strike.

[01:54:41] **HOWARD:** Now, the question is, did they have much of an impact on people's consciousness? Did people begin to reinterpret the strike in different ways because of the Marine Workers Industrial Union?

[01:54:51] **GERMAIN:** Well, I wouldn't say that they had a—they had some impact. There's no question about it. But not in the sense of directing the strike or running it.

[01:55:02] **HOWARD:** Sure.

[01:55:02] **GERMAIN:** They were assisting. They must have had an effect. From where we sat. They were helpful. The one thing that was clear, all the time, was we ran the strike. Anyone, any goof, regardless if they were one of the help, we accepted their help. Not in the sense that they're going to run it or lay down policy, no, but they were assisting; they were helpful. There's no question about it.

[01:55:38] **HOWARD:** What was Bridges' role in the strike? Anything that you can add that I may have already read?

[01:55:43] **GERMAIN:** Bridges' role was—after we went on strike, we elected the chairman of the strike, and it happened to be Bridges. He had been—well, I knew him, too, I wouldn't say very closely or personally, but I mean I worked with him. I'd been in meetings where we discussed the need. He was very helpful in organizing the union, the need for the union. He was knowledgeable. He'd sailed. He made no bones about he belonged to the IWW. He was involved in the strike in New Orleans, so of course he had some background knowledge. The guys soon realized that Harry had some answers and had some ability for the need of the proper organization. As chairman of the strike committee, of course, he naturally became known, naturally was written up in the papers. Attempts were made to buy him off. What happened was an attorney—of course, sent by the employers, obviously—asked to meet with him, and Harry wouldn't meet him alone. He took two guys along in his car. He tried to convince Harry that the thing could be settled, provided that we wouldn't do this or that. I forget the details. But he offered Harry \$10,000. But he didn't say it was for him. He says, "Here, to help the union. Do what you want with it." Of course, Harry turned him down and told him to [inaudible] ____.

Hello!

[01:57:32] **HELEN BULCKE:** Hi.

[01:57:32] **GERMAIN:** This is my wife.

[01:57:33] **HELEN:** Would you like a cup of coffee?

[01:57:34] **HOWARD:** I'm fine, no, that's ok. If you want to get one [Howard speaking to Germain], go right ahead.

[01:57:37] **GERMAIN:** No, no.

[01:57:41] **HOWARD:** What about the period between '34 and '37? It's been described as a period of intense conflict on the waterfront, engaging in a number of work stoppages, almost guerilla warfare. Some terms I've seen.

[01:57:53] **GERMAIN:** Well, I wouldn't say it was guerilla warfare. What happened was this: while the contract was settled on the points that I told you, no detail was worked out by the committee, the group. So what we were trying to do and did, we wanted to correct a lot of the bad work processes that were going on, the speed up. Unsafe conditions. There was a constant running backlog with the employer representatives. There were a lot of work stoppages because we wanted to correct the unsafe conditions. Then in '36 the employers—actually it was an attempted lock-out. That strike was more in support of the seamen. They had not gotten anywhere near, comparatively speaking, the improvements in conditions that we had. It was more in support of the seamen that we went out in '36 for ninety-odd days. Nineteen thirty-six to nineteen thirty-seven. In the settling of that, we were able to sit down with the employers and work out a more detailed contract as to working conditions, hours, and so forth.

After the '34 strike, we refused to work more than 12 hours, except if the ship was sailing. Then after '36/'37, we got it down to 10 hours. From there on eventually we got down to where now we work only eight hours, except, again, an hour leeway if the ship is sailing. That's understandable. If the guys have worked eight hours, and there's one hour's work left, well we have a minimum call-out of four hours. We understand that would make good sense for the gang to go home and have another gang come in and get four hours, even though it's fine. We believe in that. There's no abuse of that.

In that period of time, and then at each time we accomplished prior, we would get agreement to do away with more of the bad things that still existed. The main drive from '34 until '36 was to correct bad practices, unsafe practices. That sort of things. Load limits—we reached agreement on load limits, for instance. Before that, no matter how big it was or how heavy it was, if it was all they could lift, they would lift it. Many times, unsafe loads. And so, all of these, we worked all of it out in detail by committee meetings with the employers. To have safe working conditions. Most of that was done during that period of time.

[02:01:18] **HOWARD:** That leads right into the scrap iron incidents of '37, '38.

[02:01:21] **GERMAIN:** Well, the scrap iron, no, the scrap iron was a political thing.

[02:01:29] **HOWARD:** You don't see any connection, that's what I'm getting at.

[02:01:31] **GERMAIN:** No. The scrap iron stoppage was simply a support for the Chinese people against—we said so in our bulletin, that the scrap iron that we're sending to Japan would be coming back in the bodies of our own boys. We legally could not refuse to load those ships under our contract. The scrap iron was being sent to Japan. So, in order to get the public's attention on this—and I was named the organizer. I contacted Chinese organizations in town and also in the valley and had them put up a picket line.

[02:02:22] **HOWARD:** Oh, you guys initiated that?

[02:02:24] **GERMAIN:** Yeah.

[02:02:25] **HOWARD:** Oh, I didn't realize that.

[02:02:27] **GERMAIN:** So we respected the picket line. We even had then-lieutenant governor Patterson come down to the picket line and speak in favor. We were able, for a little while, to stop the movement. Of course, the employers immediately took action that we were violating our contract. We knew we couldn't hold it. The main thing we wanted was the publicity. Let it be known what the hell is going on, that we're selling scrap iron to Japan. They were already invading China at the time. We said it was obvious that we were next. We wanted them to stop not only scrap iron; we wanted to stop the sale of oil. Of course, Standard Oil kept selling it anyway. Matter of fact, after the war was declared, they still let some ships go by from Mexico for Standard Oil.

But that was publicity against what was going on in China.

[02:03:40] **HOWARD:** Did the rank and file have much of an interest in the issue, one way or the other?

[02:03:43] **GERMAIN:** Oh, yes they did. They understood it. We discussed these things in our meetings, and the rank and file knew what was going on. Naturally, of course, when the picket line showed up, we respected the picket line. Of course, it was a heck of a violation because our contract does provide that we can respect legitimate picket lines. Well, of course we called them legitimate in that sense, you know? But it worked long enough to get the publicity that we wanted. It had its effect, of course.

[02:04:15] **HOWARD:** Would you see that as an example of sort of some process of radicalization within workers, or not?

[02:04:22] **GERMAIN:** Yes, as a recognition of what was going on. You could call it radicalization, it's probably correct. In other words, our membership became aware—not everyone but many of our membership, of course, naturally—of why, what the hell was going on by shipment of this scrap iron, that the money we were making was actually blood money, that we should not participate in building up a force that would eventually attack ourselves. It was to show up that the policies in our government that allow this was not to the interest of ourselves. That was the—

[02:05:01] **HOWARD:** Do you know if there are any records of the discussion on scrap iron? I mean there's been a lot of legal documents, but I'm wondering about within the union.

[02:05:10] **GERMAIN:** I doubt very much because, when we discussed these kinds of things, we didn't keep records.

[02:05:14] **HOWARD:** I see.

[02:05:14] **GERMAIN:** Because of lawsuits.

[02:05:16] **HOWARD:** Ok.

[02:05:17] **GERMAIN:** In those cases we held our meetings, just our members, no records of them. Just maybe a general saying the question of scrap iron at the time was discussed. I was not the only guy. The main guy that organized this, that put it on, took a little while doing it. Took him about a month. He went down to the valley and met with representatives of the Chinese people and also in Chinatown of course. They were very glad to do what they did. They wanted publicity, too, but you couldn't get it in the papers. There was no anti-Japanese stories in the newspapers of what the hell was going on. This made publicity all over the country.

[02:06:26] **HOWARD:** Now, there was also an incident like that in southern California, wasn't there?

[02:06:34] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, but it wasn't as long, I don't think. As I remember. It wasn't scrap iron; what the heck was it? The main scrap iron beef was here.

[02:06:46] **HOWARD:** I remember also the employers insisted on discharging workers that were involved in the strike action in southern California. The union took a position of refusing on that, and integrated them back into various work teams.

Ok, now let's move on to the war period. One of the issues I'm working on, on the West Coast anyway, concerns the degree to which the labor force was disrupted during the war. By that I mean people who joined

the longshore battalions or may have been drafted. Was there much of that process going on? Were the guys before the war the same ones that were here after the war?

[02:07:29] **GERMAIN:** First of all, when war broke out, we took a position that we would support the war effort, and there would be no strikes. Not that there wasn't some arguing, but there'd be no strikes. We took a no-strike position and gave full support to the war effort. "Keep the ships sailing," is how we put it. We got a lot of our guys to volunteer for the services, particularly those that had longshore experience who then went into the Pacific to help discharge the ships and handle the cargoes. Had what they called a longshore battalion. Many of our members became the higher-ups for that and trained others.

[02:08:27] **HOWARD:** Where were they stationed mostly? Various islands in the Pacific?

[02:08:29] **GERMAIN:** Various islands, yeah. I forget. I had letters from those guys, a stack of them. They were stationed various places to help discharge. I almost went myself. They wanted me to take over a port in Australia, but it was towards the end of the war . . .

[02:08:52] **HOWARD:** They were all volunteers?

[02:08:53] **GERMAIN:** All of them.

[02:08:55] **HOWARD:** Do you have any idea how many of them went?

[02:08:56] **GERMAIN:** I can't remember now. I should have known. Not only did they come—I was mostly acquainted here, but there were some up from [San] Pedro. I remember the secretary, he volunteered. A number from Portland did, and Seattle. Of course, a number from here, too.

[02:09:15] **HOWARD:** What would you guess as a figure? I have no idea. I'm just looking for anything.

[02:09:21] **GERMAIN:** I tell you, I don't know. I wouldn't guess a figure because I really—we didn't keep track of it at the port. They came from various locals. How many there were, I don't remember. I don't know if there's any record of it.

[02:09:40] **HOWARD:** If there is, I don't . . .

[02:09:41] **GERMAIN:** I doubt it very much because—unless the local did itself. We were so damn busy trying to get manpower. Matter of fact, at one point during the war, we had over 10,000 men working here in San Francisco. Working 24 hours. Matter of fact, we had a rule: they had to work two weeks before they get a day off.

[02:10:05] **HOWARD:** Is that right? 24 hours a day, huh?

[02:10:08] **GERMAIN:** Well, yeah, 24 hours a day.

[02:10:09] **HOWARD:** —munitions and supplies.

[02:10:10] **GERMAIN:** But the gang had to work two weeks before they got a day off. Hell's bells. Just unbelievable the amount of work that was done.

[02:10:30] **HOWARD:** How much opposition was there to things like the no strike pledge, Bridges proposed dropping sling load limits, and things like that?

[02:10:37] **GERMAIN:** None.

[02:10:38] **HOWARD:** None?

[02:10:39] **GERMAIN:** None. Effectively, there wasn't any. Everybody understood what was going on. They knew that, sure, we still want to work safe, but they knew and understood the importance of keeping the ships moving. Keep the cargo rolling. Of course some things happened. In the first part of the war, one of the Matson liners—I can't remember which one; it doesn't matter—just before the war broke out, came in from Australia. The military wanted the ship discharged as fast as possible because they wanted to take—they did—a group of soldiers over to the Philippines. I was president of the local that year. I was called into a meeting with the Army and Matson. The military wondered how fast can the ship be discharged, how many hours? Matson company representatives, maybe not exact, but something like 140 hours, they said. Of course the military were pushing awfully hard for faster. Eventually they asked me, and I said, "I think we can cut down on those hours, but I will not put a figure on it." Except the military needed to. They wanted to know what. I said, "If I can pick the gang and the supervision," what we call walking bosses, "I think I can cut down on that 140 hours of work." So the military are in charge, and they say, Ok, you've got the authority. But Matson didn't like because I didn't want to pick some of their men, some of their home boys. So I picked out the gangs and picked out the walking bosses. We got the ship discharged in 87 hours. Something like that.

Another one. We told our people, you know, zip your lip. Never talk to anybody about what you're loading or unloading. Don't talk no matter what, where, or how. Can't do it. So, one night, around 11 o'clock, my phone rang at home. The steward in the gang is working behind the docks. He says, "Gerry, I want you to come out here and see something. I know the rule, 'Zip your lip.' I want you out here." So I went out. I had a pass; I could go on any military dock in the early days of the war.

Each blank ship that discharges has what they call a loading officer. Here they had loaded planes, with the wings off. They're boxed. They put them on the bottom of the hatch. They put dummies over it. They were going to put little tanks on top of that. Well, this alarmed the steward. Now, realized, they'll go right through. But, ok, the Air Corps officer had the things loaded. He took off, and whoever's in charge of the tanks, he didn't give a shit. He put it down there. This guy called me, so I got there. They already had loaded about a dozen. They were small tanks, but [inaudible] _____. So I went over there and got the commanding general out of bed. By that time, it was almost one o'clock. Took him to the dock where the guys were getting off and I told him. And I said, "This is terrible. Can't have it." So grudgingly he got up and came on down onto the pier. The ship had just pulled out on its way to the army base to load some more stuff. So we drove over there. Where they had the boxed airplanes. He begged me not to say anything. But he promised me that it would never happen again, and what did I suggest? I said, "Hire one of our people as a walking boss, who knows how to load ships. Never mind the military. Let them deliver it on the dock. Let our people pick the cargo. [inaudible] _____. Things like that. Of course, they weren't organized either. They weren't prepared for this sort of stuff.

[02:15:55] **HOWARD:** So, basically, the military operated how many docks?

[02:16:00] **GERMAIN:** Oh, well, I'd say technically all of the docks.

[02:16:03] **HOWARD:** Oh, is that right?

[02:16:04] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, well, of course there was very little—most of the cargo then was bound for the military or assisting the military. So you had military control practically everywhere. Of course, their own docks were very busy. But they used other docks if necessary.

[02:16:21] **HOWARD:** So, technically they were in charge of supervising the discharge of cargo?

[02:16:24] **GERMAIN:** Oh, yeah, yeah.

[02:16:25] **HOWARD:** Though in many instances, practically speaking, longshoremen—

[02:16:28] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, of course, they used the regular system. The stevedoring companies and so forth. That also led to some things that people complained about. I was on a special committee; we finally got it corrected. The employers, [inaudible] _____ their members, they got 10 percent above the payroll.

[02:16:55] **HOWARD:** Ten percent above?

[02:16:56] **GERMAIN:** Yeah. In order to discharge a ship. Whatever the payroll was, the government paid for it. Their profit was 10 percent. So what happens? They were ordering more gangs than they needed. The gangs would stand by not doing anything, but they got paid.

[02:17:16] **HOWARD:** Because they would get a higher 10 percent commission then.

[02:17:20] **GERMAIN:** Certainly. One time we had a special committee. There was an army officer, a person from all of the employers, myself, and there was a fourth guy. What the hell was he? Anyway, we were a special committee to see to it that the man power wasn't wasted. One night we went over to the army base. There's a tanker laying there. It's loaded, but they're going to load gangs on deck. On the other side of the army base—don't know if you've ever been; it's a big round thing—anyway, I see barges there with planes on them. So I asked. There's six gangs of longshoremen sitting there doing nothing, waiting for the planes. I talked to the gangs. They were playing cards and stuff. Couldn't blame the guys. But they didn't feel too good about it. They said, "It's the third night we sat. We haven't done a tap of work."

So I go into main office, the dispatch office. The guy in charge, I said, "What's going on?" Got a whole committee, but I knew the guy. I said, "What's going on? The third night that the gangs' have been standing around." Obviously, they've got to know the same thing. "When are those planes supposed to load?" He says, "Damned if I know." He has a spindle sitting there, about two dozen slips of paper. I looked at that spindle, "Maybe it's on there." He looked; sure enough, there it was. Been there for two days. While I'm there, I insisted on getting tugboats and getting barges with the planes loaded up.

[02:19:10] **HOWARD:** Now it's interesting because the employers at the time were making allegations that the ILWU was engaged in some kind of a slowdown. No basis to those accusations, in your opinion?

[02:19:19] **GERMAIN:** No, to the contrary. We were the ones that were riding herds on them to see to it that work was done. Of course, the committee I belonged to, we used to meet with the top brass. "Nothing said here, gentlemen, is to go outside this room." That was the bad stories of losing ships. Yeah, we worked very closely with them and saw—well the same thing happened over in the Oakland naval base. Things were going haywire, and [inaudible] _____ our officers. He was president of the warehouse local. But I met with him. The commanding officer came over, and he wasn't satisfied with what was going on in the naval base, loading and all that. He was very honest. He says in private life he was with a large company that furnished supplies to hotels. Lines and that sort of thing. Granted, a pretty big job. A big chain of hotels. He had a little boat, a private boat. Before the war started, the navy convinced them that it probably would be a war, [and] for them to join the Naval Reserve and the boat could be used for submarines and stuff like that. So they gave him a rank. He said the only thing he ever stole was the whiskey and eats in his little boat, in his little freezer. He knew about stolen cargo. He said, "I don't know the first thing about it. I know it's not going right." So I suggested to him that he hire some of our people. [Inaudible] _____. There were two others. They got to be buzzing. They

got the authorities. They were using a lot of military, too, you see, and saw that planes had to be handled properly.

[02:21:40] **HOWARD:** I have two questions about this period. The reason I raised it. One was, of course, the question of the disruption of the workforce. You don't think that was too severe. You didn't see sort of a—

[02:21:47] **GERMAIN:** Not to the point—

[02:21:47] **HOWARD:** —a breakup of the workforce or anything.

[02:21:52] **GERMAIN:** To the contrary. Because the guys themselves, it's contained. It's how we get the cargo in. Otherwise, these things going on, they'd call in and say, "Look, my son is over there somewhere, and, goddamn it, I want to get the cargo out of here." They worked. There was never any disruption that was caused by us, by our members. To the contrary. We put up with things that we wouldn't have normally.

[02:22:22] **HOWARD:** In some ways, that's almost evidence that there was something beyond a commitment simply to trade unionism. Because, if they were simply trade unionists, they would have said, look, the war may be important, but union rules are more important. Something like that.

[02:22:34] **GERMAIN:** We didn't think that. We took the position, "Keep the ships rolling." We tried to. We used a lot of military men in the hiring hall. We had a hiring officer on the second floor of our building. If the guy could make up the steps, he was hired. He needed hands and feet. It's a fact! We had 10,000 people working. We used any military guy that was off duty, if he wanted to make an extra dollar, in the hiring hall.

[02:23:04] **HOWARD:** Must have been a lot of unskilled labor then.

[02:23:07] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, but, you see, you have two guys who don't know from nothing in a gang of twelve, they soon learn. A lot of it was just paying work. We had to train winch drivers; we had to train leadership in the gangs. The hands and feet—that's what we said. If you can get up to the second floor, you're hired. Very few we turned down, very few. Unless you're really too old and really knew they couldn't climb up the ladders in the ships. A lot of them could work on the dock and discharge cargo out of boxcars or into boxcars. Stuff like that.

[02:23:48] **HOWARD:** You say there were at one time 10,000 workers—

[02:23:49] **GERMAIN:** Ten thousand over there. We had 10,300-some-odd.

[02:23:54] **HOWARD:** There would be records of that, wouldn't there?

[02:23:56] **GERMAIN:** Oh, yeah, Local 10 would have that in the records. I know, because I was president. Of course, they were not members.

[02:24:07] **HOWARD:** Ok, they were just working longshore.

[02:24:08] **GERMAIN:** B-men. Some of them became members. For a while there, if they were six months. Then when the bottom dropped out, after the war was over, we had to lay off a lot of them. Just had to on the basis of when you were hired. Started with the guy that was last hired. We exempted guys that had been in the service. That guy stayed. But, if you had not been in the service, sorry. We just started from the last guy hired, and we laid off the first batch of them. I remember serving them that were laid off, something like 3,000. Of

course, work got so slow that eventually a lot of them left on their own. They went back to whatever they were doing. They just disappeared.

[02:25:04] **HOWARD:** Now, there was a large influx of Black people during the war, right?

[02:25:08] **GERMAIN:** Yes, a lot of them. Of course, we already had Blacks in our union.

[02:25:13] **HOWARD:** What proportion of Blacks was it before the war and during?

[02:25:16] **GERMAIN:** Well, I'll tell you. If my memory serves me right, 1938 in Local 10 we had something like 180 Black people.

[02:25:29] **HOWARD:** Is it 1938?

[02:25:31] **GERMAIN:** It is, yeah.

[02:25:33] **HOWARD:** About 180?

[02:25:33] **GERMAIN:** Give or take a few. Of course, many were added during the war. After then, I think the majority of membership of Local 10 are Black. I don't know, we were down from 1,800 but the majority are Black. Many of them, of course, had worked in the shipyards and then got into the . . .

[02:25:57] **HOWARD:** Someone told me that many of these Black people who came in during the war were from Louisiana. Is that true?

[02:26:02] **GERMAIN:** They were from all over.

[02:26:04] **HOWARD:** So it wasn't predominantly from Louisiana?

[02:26:07] **GERMAIN:** No, no. There were a few; there were some. They were from everywhere Down South. See, they were brought in to work in the shipyards.

[02:26:14] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[02:26:16] **GERMAIN:** Long before VE Day, the ships started quitting down. They had reached their saturation point; they were laying off people. We still could use them, so a lot of them got into the longshoring industry were laid off by the shipyards.

[02:26:33] **HOWARD:** Did the fact that the ILWU had really an exemplary record on racial rights, did that serve as a magnet almost attracting Black people?

[02:26:41] **GERMAIN:** Oh, yes, it did because by that time they already had Black dispatchers, even though they were the minority. We had Black officers, business agents, stuff like that. Guys that were elected on the basis of what they did and not what their color was.

[02:26:57] **HOWARD:** So it was almost two processes. One was the demand for labor pulling them, and, at the same time, the fact that this was a progressive union that wouldn't discriminate.

[02:27:05] **GERMAIN:** They knew that they wouldn't be discriminated against because of their color or where they were from.

[02:27:09] **HOWARD:** Now, I also read somewhere that there were some instances where white gang foreman would call up the hall and request white men only or something like that.

[02:27:17] **GERMAIN:** Oh, yeah, there were some individuals. Well, not so much here. That problem many existed in Portland. Of course I went down there when I was on the maritime commission. I found out by that time that the Manpower Board that was supposed to send people out, they were not sending any Blacks down to the waterfront in Portland. So I waltzed in there—didn't tell them that I was in the union—I showed them my identification for the labor board. So I asked to see their referral. I noticed that by each name there was W or N.

[02:28:00] **HOWARD:** Is that right?

[02:28:01] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, yeah. So I acted stupid. "What's that mean?" "A white or Black." "Oh, I see." I went further, "I noticed you don't send any down to the waterfront on longshore." "Well, we have an understanding with the officers of that local. They don't want them."

[02:28:06] **HOWARD:** Now, I'm sorry, who were—

[02:28:26] **GERMAIN:** The War Manpower board.

[02:28:28] **HOWARD:** In Portland.

[02:28:29] **GERMAIN:** In Portland.

[02:28:30] **HOWARD:** And they're in charge of distributing manpower to various industries.

[02:28:32] **GERMAIN:** Manpower to all the industries. They were busy as heck.

[02:28:34] **HOWARD:** In the longshore industry, they had a list of appointments. So they were keeping track of white and Black.

[02:28:38] **GERMAIN:** They were. The War Manpower Board.

[02:28:40] **HOWARD:** Because the union said that they didn't want Black people.

[02:28:46] **GERMAIN:** Exactly. They said that to me, and I said, "Well, let me tell you something. You better change that policy real quick. I'm getting on the horn, and I'm going to call Washington." So they changed it. I asked them who are the officers at that local. They told me, and when I told these officers, they denied it. I couldn't prove it, that they individually had said so. But I said, "They didn't dream it." "Of course I didn't!" There's nothing in writing—they were smart enough. I went around the Portland tops myself—not the right move. But I asked individual rank foremen. "Would you object to having a Black man work on your gang?" "Yeah. I don't want a goddamn Black." One guy, I said it to him, and he says, "I'd quit working before I'd accept one of those guys." I said, "For Christ's sake, the war is going on." He said, "Eh!" I said, "You ever travel? You ever been on a train?" "Course I have." "You ever eat in the dining car?" "Yeah, naturally!" "Well, who cooked it? Did you ever have a look? Who served you?" "Ah, that's different!"

[02:30:03] **HOWARD:** How do you explain that in Portland? Because it persisted through the sixties I know, too.

[02:30:14] **GERMAIN:** Well, Portland was one of our problem areas, as far as the color line was concerned. It's gone now; it doesn't exist anymore. But for some strange reason—now Seattle, they always had Blacks.

Tacoma had Blacks. But Portland, for some strange reason, had this attitude. Well, of course, we broke it down during the war. But again the same thing happened. Portland Harbor was used mainly for shipping of rail engines and stuff to Russia. That was the main shipping point.

[02:30:51] **HOWARD:** During the war?

[02:30:52] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, during the war. That was the area where they concentrated. They had more goddamn work than you could shake a stick at. They needed to hire help. Doggone it, you know. That region, of course, has changed. Of course, then, when the war ended, they had to let go. Who were the first ones let go? Obviously it was the last hired, who were the Blacks.

[02:31:16] **HOWARD:** Didn't that also happen here, though? I mean, didn't it happen anywhere—

[02:31:18] **GERMAIN:** It happened here, but we ran on the basis of what day you came in. We did let go a lot of Blacks; we let go a lot of whites, too. We had hired both. We went by number. Each man was numbered, and we start with the largest number and up. First we laid off 1,500 then we went another 900. Whether it was Black, white, or green, it didn't make any difference. We had registration, see. If you were hired last, out. That was it.

[02:31:53] **HOWARD:** What was your position with the War Industry Board? Is that what it was? What was it called, War Manpower Commission?

[02:31:58] **GERMAIN:** It was a special committee that was set up which had an employer representative and union representative on it. But the employers were represented also—just employers, it wasn't the employers association. They had their representatives also.

[02:32:21] **HOWARD:** You were just concerned with what, matching labor supply and labor needs?

[02:32:25] **GERMAIN:** To ensure that manpower wasn't wasted, and assist in getting manpower and seeing there was no abuses like the ones I told you earlier of gangs standing by or somebody didn't look for the order. So individual oversight, I wouldn't say policy, but the one thing that I told you—that employer got 10 percent. For an example, a normal time when the ship was leaving, they have a special group called linesmen who let go of the lines. During the war, they used to let all five or ten gangs stand there until the ship left. They'd stand on the pier. It was a waste of time.

[02:33:09] **HOWARD:** How did that 10 percent profit margin compare to their normal profit margin?

[02:33:13] **GERMAIN:** Well, I don't know. Obviously, you don't have to figure very much that if you have ten gangs working ten hours and you bill for twenty hours, your take is double. That's exactly what was operative. That's where a lot of the employers complained. That's the time, too, that the four on and four off started. In other words, there's a gang of men of eight. Only four work; the others sit down.

[02:33:39] **HOWARD:** Oh, is that where that started?

[02:33:41] **GERMAIN:** Sure, they had so many men.

[02:33:44] **HOWARD:** That they complained about so long, right?

[02:33:46] **GERMAIN:** Of course now the habit stayed, and the employers raise it every time we negotiate. "We don't want any witnesses. They gotta work."

[02:33:55] **HOWARD:** So that began during the war, the negotiation with the employers actually?

[02:33:58] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, of course, because it wasn't right. Later on it kicked them in the teeth because now he's got in the habit. I remember, later on, shortly after the war, an employer, pretty decent guy, he called me at home one time around eleven o'clock at night. "I got a problem." "Yeah," I says. He says, "I'll come down to your house and pick you up. I want you to see something." I said, "I'm not the business agent; I'm the president. You got a problem? Call the business agent." "No, no, I want you to see." Well, he was a pretty decent guy. I liked him. He was a pretty honest guy. "What is it?" He said, "I'll show you." "Ok, alright." So he comes down to the house and picks me up. We go down to Pier 40—I forget what it was. Of course, Fisherman's Wharf. We get there, and it's about a quarter to twelve at night. The ship is working all night. About 10 minutes to 12, I see 15 or 20 men walking out, a little early. I thought that's what he was complaining about. They're supposed to work to 12 o'clock or whatever. I figure, well, that's the dock. The guys are coming off the ship. So I didn't say anything. Pretty soon there was no more men. I said, "What's up?" I said, "How many gangs have you got working? That's probably only half." He said, "That's what I wanted you to see." I said, "I'll be darned." "I hate to keep you here, but," he says, "will you stay till one o'clock? Let's see when they come back." At one o'clock at the pier, guys arrive in cars with their wives. The other half came, see! [Germain and Howard laugh]

[02:36:03] **HOWARD:** Now what year was this?

[02:36:05] **GERMAIN:** This was after the war. I forget what year, but shortly after the war. They got in such a habit of working four on and four off, that they got so organized. They'd work half the night and then go home and let the other half come the rest of the night.

But, those things are all straightened out. That doesn't happen anymore.

[02:36:27] **HOWARD:** Yeah. Let's see. I guess I'll move into the postwar period. The major transformations that seem to occur there are that Local 10 and several others are pretty much—well, they elect conservative members of the union to their presidencies and offices. Isn't that a basic interpretation?

[02:36:47] **GERMAIN:** Hmm, no, I—

[02:36:49] **HOWARD:** About [James] Kearney?

[02:36:50] **GERMAIN:** Kearney?

[02:36:50] **HOWARD:** Isn't that his name?

[02:36:51] **GERMAIN:** Oh, he's dead.

[02:36:52] **HOWARD:** Yeah. Wasn't he identified with sort of the right wing of the union?

[02:36:56] **GERMAIN:** He was identified more with the Catholic—I guess he was a pretty strong Catholic. But he was pretty much involved with that Catholic . . .

[02:37:08] **HOWARD:** Association of Catholic Trade Unionists?

[02:37:10] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, yeah. Right. He was very much influenced by them and tried to get that kind of a policy adopted in Local 10, but it never really worked. The poor guy died not three or four years ago.

[02:37:25] **HOWARD:** Hmm. Well, do you see that as—

[02:37:32] **GERMAIN:** The present leadership in Local 10, well, we've had a number of Blacks. Very effective some of them. Some of them not. At the present time, they have a Hawaiian as the business agent—he's originally from Hawai'i. The president and the secretary are both white. The international board member is Black, but he was president of the local. Very capable. Very, very capable.

[02:38:14] **HOWARD:** My reading indicates that there was—that this was a new development. These guys who were elected to the presidencies here, in Local 13, in Local 19 in Seattle, were pretty much oppositional forces within the union. They didn't come from the Bridges camp, in other words.

[02:38:32] **GERMAIN:** I wouldn't say so. I know Seattle wasn't. Portland wasn't. As far as San Pedro's concerned, there's been a couple guys that were not exactly, well, I would say [they] weren't too hot for Bridges. Not to the point of destruction, if you know what I mean.

[02:38:59] **HOWARD:** Yeah, but they did challenge the international leadership on questions of foreign policy and things like that, right? Around Korea? Screening?

[02:39:07] **GERMAIN:** Well, Korea was a mixed-up affair.

[02:39:09] **HOWARD:** I know.

[02:39:13] **GERMAIN:** Later on, they saw that they were wrong, the opposition to the International position. That happened, though, when they first started. The opposition at the time, well, it was sort of mixed. There was one guy from [San] Pedro, I remember. He's dead, too, by the way.

[02:39:39] **HOWARD:** What was his name, do you remember?

[02:39:40] **GERMAIN:** I'm trying to remember. Not Smith . . . I'll try to remember. Names, I have a hell of a time with.

[02:39:47] **HOWARD:** I am, too. I can sympathize.

[02:39:53] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, I just don't know. He died about a year ago. He was president of the local.

[02:39:58] **HOWARD:** It wasn't George Love?

[02:39:59] **GERMAIN:** No, no, no. George Love followed me as the arbitrator.

[02:40:04] **HOWARD:** Oh, ok.

[02:40:06] **GERMAIN:** No, and George was a walking boss. He was longshore, and then he went with the walking bosses.

[02:40:15] **HOWARD:** It isn't William Lawrence?

[02:40:16] **GERMAIN:** Oh no, no, no. Bill is dead, too, you know. Bill is a very close friend and supporter of me and Harry. Oh, he'd have his differences.

[02:40:24] **HOWARD:** That's what I thought. Didn't he oppose you guys on the mechanization thing, right?

[02:40:28] **GERMAIN:** No, no, not Bill Lawrence.

[02:40:29] **HOWARD:** Really?

[02:40:29] **GERMAIN:** To the contrary, no. No, Bill, was a forceful guy and you knew what he thought. Bill would express his opinion, but, the difference is, if the policy is adopted, he never sabotaged it. You know what I mean?

[02:40:51] **HOWARD:** Yeah.

[02:40:52] **GERMAIN:** Sure, I've had my differences with Harry, too. We're free to express our opinion but we've always followed—it's generally been true, and, if you can call it a keystone of our strength in the union, is that you're entitled to and can express your opinion and try to get the rank and file to adopt your position. If the majority goes the other way, you don't sabotage it. I know, of course I was vice president many times. The foreign office wanted me to work on policy. Sometimes I'd be all by myself and three against me. Other times Harry and I against the other two. Sometimes three of us against Harry. But, once a policy was adopted, we followed it. Never any backbiting. Never said afterwards, "Remember I told you it wouldn't work?" None of that. We figured, ok, we're going to make mistakes. The errors you make, or you didn't see something, is expected, but we never got personal about it. You should have done this or done that—none of that.

[02:42:07] **HOWARD:** It's a principled way to run an organization.

[02:42:09] **GERMAIN:** Well, the only way. Democracy works in the ILWU. Now and then you get a screwball. You're bound to. Never to the point where it would disrupt or have a lasting effect detrimental to the benefit of the rank and file.

[02:42:32] **HOWARD:** How would you characterize people that were close to Act Two? People like Kearney. My understanding of it is that Seattle was one of the more conservative locals, followed by Los Angeles, and then the San Francisco local sort of shifted back and forth between the Bridges and anti-Bridges factions.

[02:42:49] **GERMAIN:** Seattle was never, no. Seattle was always more progressive.

[02:42:54] **HOWARD:** It was?

[02:42:55] **GERMAIN:** Portland was the weakest.

[02:42:57] **HOWARD:** That's strange because everyone else was telling me Seattle.

[02:42:59] **GERMAIN:** No, no. There's been times when the leadership in Seattle was weaker than we'd like.

[02:43:08] **HOWARD:** You say "weaker," and I'm saying "left" and "right." Is there a correlation there?

[02:43:12] **GERMAIN:** By that I mean that there's been times when Seattle did not exactly go along with the international positions as they should have. How you break that open in the local, that's hard to tell. You don't know what the individual who was opposed to it, what his motivation was. That's pretty hard to tell. Portland—

[02:43:36] **HOWARD:** On what kinds of issues did they oppose the international? Were they like foreign policy questions or union questions or a little of both?

[02:43:43] **GERMAIN:** A little of both. For instance, like in the last negotiations I sat in. There are problems in Seattle that don't affect San Francisco. There's problems in San Francisco that don't affect San Pedro. So the representative from Seattle, for instance, was very much opposed to some of the proposals that the majority of the committee felt was the right approach to that problem. It's the internal things, really, that doesn't mean much to . . . For instance, on the docks we have these containers now. The containers have to be repaired. Up till now, in some locals, not always, a member of the repair crew, not a member of the ILWU, would pick up the empty container and take it to the repair shop and, once it's repaired, bring it back. We insisted that that's longshore work.

[02:44:52] **HOWARD:** The picking up and transporting?

[02:44:54] **GERMAIN:** Yeah. The movement of the container is longshore work. Well, we got it this time. We settled it. In Seattle, they had reached a local agreement whereby they did in one place and not another. In order to accommodate, they pulled a work stoppage while they were in negotiations. So the ship owners, in order to accommodate the Seattle local, moved the ship. Even so, they had a work stoppage. Well, the guy from Seattle is very much P.O.'ed [pissed off] because it took quite a while before we got this. We kept hammering away. Dammit, that's longshore work, and, dammit, we should have it. We had the same problem here. But in [San] Pedro we didn't.

They're small items in a sense, but it's enough to destroy the unity. Portland hasn't got that problem, so they didn't give a damn. The guy from Portland, "What the hell? There's no problem with us. We get it. We'll do it." In other words, if it came down to a strike, they sure wouldn't have felt that they should strike because Portland had nothing to strike about it. This sort of stuff. But it all works out.

There are no, what I would say, are real deep divisions. There's difference of opinion now.

[02:46:27] **HOWARD:** But there were in the fifties, weren't there? The divisions were more real then. They seemed to be more real.

[02:46:32] **GERMAIN:** Well, I don't think so. At least, that's not my feeling. There were differences. They were not the kind of difference that would tear a union apart. For instance, there was a guy, a president of a local now, but he was a problem. He answers no on anything. He's been president of the local a number of times. Hard-headed guy. He has some support in his local, obviously. They elected him to negotiation committee, for instance. He didn't have support. But sometimes—

[02:47:15] **HOWARD:** I think they may have claimed him at the caucus. I was here for the caucus. Well, so, you don't see the election of Kearney in Local 10—

[02:47:26] **GERMAIN:** Oh, that's long, long ago.

[02:47:27] **HOWARD:** —as terribly significant.

[02:47:28] **GERMAIN:** No. Matter of fact, Kearney followed me in. My term was up, and he was elected. My second year as president, he was elected vice president. The following year he was elected as president.

[02:47:41] **HOWARD:** Oh, he served with you, huh? Same time?

[02:47:43] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, first year, he served as my vice president. Then he became president.

[02:47:47] **HOWARD:** You guys didn't run as a slate per se or anything like that?

[02:47:50] **GERMAIN:** No, no, no.

[02:47:52] **HOWARD:** The reason I'm asking this is because a number of people have suggested that when the left leadership of Local 10—I guess that's you, in this case—during the war sort of backed off on defending the trade union rights that they had won earlier, that the membership reacted to that after the war and then elected guys like Kearney who were from a different camp and were militant trade unionists and conservative politically.

[02:48:17] **GERMAIN:** Kearney was elected as vice president. It was during the last part of the war. I can't remember exactly. The following year, of course, he was president. Then, when his term was up, I was re-elected.

[02:48:34] **HOWARD:** Oh, you were? So it went back to you?

[02:48:38] **GERMAIN:** Oh yeah. Matter of fact, when I ran in '47, I was president of the local again. I gave up the rest of my term.

[02:48:47] **HOWARD:** So that doesn't seem to be a real major shift politically within the union.

[02:48:51] **GERMAIN:** No, no. Kearney was a capable guy but his Catholic outfit that he was following was not always about the goals in the local. He was a likable guy, personable sort of a person. A very capable guy. But he didn't have any use for Harry. He was sure that Harry was a Communist and said so. During the time that Harry was on trial, the last trial that finally ended all that crap, he said that he'd be happy to carry Harry's suitcase to the ship to send him back to Australia.

[02:49:39] **HOWARD:** That sounds like a pretty big division to me, but, um . . . Let's see, so we've covered that question. The Korean War thing doesn't seem to be a major issue. The union clearly repudiated Bridges on that question. Local 10 did, anyway, in terms of voting. Any interpretation of that?

[02:50:01] **GERMAIN:** Well, at that time, Harry's position was that this thing was haywire. Being very democratic requires having leaders who sometimes are stuck. It's our boys, right or wrong, that sort of thing. Harry's position was that it was a long war, but eventually, of course, he was proven to be correct. It had a little upheaval for a while, but it had no bad effect as far as the organization was concerned. The fact that some of the people felt that Harry was wrong, isn't the first time but they still understand that they have a democratic organization. You can speak your peace, and it may not always be agreed with, but basically they know that the interest of the union staying together is more important at least. Although they expressed an opinion about it, they won't let it destroy the union.

[02:51:01] **HOWARD:** There was no question in your mind during this whole period, then, that Bridges was going to be challenged or repudiated in whole or something. The reason I ask this is I've gone through and read all the Newsweek and Businessweek and everything else from that period. Their interpretation is this is it, Bridges is on his last leg. He's on his way out. Of course, they've been saying that since '34.

[02:51:20] **GERMAIN:** Well, their biggest advantage was time they had him on trial with [Henry] Schmidt and [J.R.] Robertson, and it eventually went to the Supreme Court and that was it. Thrown out. Harry has never denied that he spoke with, discussed matters with people that were known Communists. He said, "I'll speak with anybody if they have any good ideas." He always denied, and I think it was right, that he never belonged.

[02:51:53] **HOWARD:** They were just after him because he was a militant unionist, I think that was clear.

[02:51:56] **GERMAIN:** Oh, sure. They had never seen anything like him. Normally they've always been able to control the leadership.

[02:52:02] **HOWARD:** He had a base of support, [which] is I think the other difference.

[02:52:04] **GERMAIN:** Down to brass tacks.

[02:52:08] **HOWARD:** What about the screening program that happened in '50, '52 I guess it was, with the Coast Guard?

[02:52:14] **GERMAIN:** That was by the government. A number of our guys were not allowed to work on military cargoes. That was a phony deal too.

[02:52:29] **HOWARD:** I know Bridges' position and the international position was that it was a disguised form of union busting.

[02:52:33] **GERMAIN:** It was, there's no question about it.

[02:52:35] **HOWARD:** But, yet, the majority of the union went along with it, right?

[02:52:37] **GERMAIN:** Well, look, there was a question of here's the government taking a position, claiming this, that, and the other thing. They screened guys for god-knows-what reasons. I don't know, not too many longshoremen were involved. Two of them that were known members of the [Communist] Party.

[02:53:03] **HOWARD:** Who was that?

[02:53:03] **GERMAIN:** Well, there was Archie Brown.

[02:53:05] **HOWARD:** Was he screened?

[02:53:06] **GERMAIN:** Well, Archie went in the service.

[02:53:08] **HOWARD:** He did?

[02:53:09] **GERMAIN:** Oh yeah. He had a good record, yeah, sure. He joined the service.

[02:53:12] **HOWARD:** When?

[02:53:13] **GERMAIN:** During the war.

[02:53:14] **HOWARD:** Oh, so he was screened before the war.

[02:53:16] **GERMAIN:** Well, no, he was screened during that time but, even so. What they had against Archie—he went to Spain and fought in the civil war. Then later on, during the war in Germany, he joined the military here. There weren't very many; I don't remember more than half a dozen that were screened. There were more screened in the—

[02:53:42] **HOWARD:** There were more than that.

[02:53:43] **GERMAIN:** In Local 10?

[02:53:43] **HOWARD:** One hundred fifty.

[02:53:44] **GERMAIN:** No, no, no.

[02:53:46] **HOWARD:** No? I just read a source, said 147 longshoremen were screened in 1952.

[02:53:50] **GERMAIN:** Coastwise, yeah.

[02:53:51] **HOWARD:** No, in San Francisco.

[02:53:52] **GERMAIN:** No, I don't think.

[02:53:53] **HOWARD:** No?

[02:53:54] **GERMAIN:** I have no memory of that many. I know a half a dozen guys.

[02:53:58] **HOWARD:** They may not have all been political. I'm sure they weren't. Most of them were probably for other things.

[02:54:01] **GERMAIN:** Maybe some of them never said anything. I don't know.

[02:54:03] **HOWARD:** Would there be any records of that? Did the ILWU keep records of who got screened?

[02:54:08] **GERMAIN:** I doubt it very much.

[02:54:08] **HOWARD:** All the stuff I'm interested in, there's no records.

[02:54:10] **GERMAIN:** It was eventually forgotten about, the whole thing.

[02:54:16] **HOWARD:** Ok, let me see. I think that's all I had to ask about this particular period. We're almost—we're getting near the end now.

The 1948 strike, there's nothing really to talk about there. I think I pretty much read everything on that. Last section here is on mechanization. I read Lincoln Fairley's book on that [Facing Mechanization] ; have you seen that?

[02:54:40] **GERMAIN:** Yeah.

[02:54:40] **HOWARD:** I think that's an outstanding work. It answers most of my questions. I just wanted to get a little more feedback on it. At the end of that book, Linc takes the position—I've talked to him about it, he still says this is his position—that you could characterize it as class collaboration. He hasn't really made up his mind, even at this late date, whether it was a good or a bad thing to do. What are your feelings?

[02:55:00] **GERMAIN:** Well, we discussed this. When it first started, they had a special convention we held in Portland, where we discussed this approach of mechanization. It was the recommendation of the national officers at the time—they had discussed and studied quite a bit—to oppose it would not work.

[02:55:32] **HOWARD:** Why?

[02:55:33] **GERMAIN:** Because you couldn't stop that progress. You could not stop it. Impossible. Now, of course, for us to get something out of it, our share of mechanization. Where we missed the boat, and there was

no one could predict it, we felt that it would take at least 10-12 years before it was worldwide. The first company to start that was actually the Alaska Steamship Company. They made small containers.

[02:56:09] **HOWARD:** Before Matson, huh?

[02:56:09] **GERMAIN:** Yeah. Before Matson. I know this because I used to take of Alaska and I saw them there. Their idea there was, what they did was they put the liquor in there because too much liquor was lost in the shipment.

[02:56:24] **HOWARD:** Pilfering or something, you mean?

[02:56:25] **GERMAIN:** Not only by longshore but by the crew, too.

[02:56:28] **HOWARD:** Makes sense.

[02:56:31] **GERMAIN:** So they put the liquor in these small containers, they called them.

[02:56:34] **HOWARD:** So containerization began that way?

[02:56:35] **GERMAIN:** Began there. Then Matson started the big one.

When we discussed it, the general feeling was it would take a good 10 years or more before it became a worldwide deal. This happened to be wrong. It spread worldwide in no time at all. First through Matson to the [Hawaiian] islands. Next thing you know, they all had them. I saw it for myself in Europe. They had them in Sweden; they had them in Finland; they had them everywhere. France, Belgium, every harbor has them. So it didn't take very long before this mechanization went worldwide. As I say, our approach was to get our share of it. So we agreed to allow and not oppose the introduction of these mechanization items.

[02:57:29] **HOWARD:** You knew it was going to reduce the membership, though. You were aware of that.

[02:57:32] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, but wait a minute. Nobody was laid off.

[02:57:36] **HOWARD:** Right, but it would reduce your base.

[02:57:40] **GERMAIN:** We couldn't add more. But the fellows that retired in 1951 got \$7,900—

[02:57:48] **HOWARD:** 'Sixty-one?

[02:57:49] **GERMAIN:** In '61, got \$7,900. That was increased later on to \$13,000. Of course, the third time around, look, we bought that package twice, but that's value again. But they made upward adjustments in the pensions for those guys. So the guys that retired in the second group, they got \$13,000 cash. Which was not a bad deal. We did not—we were not able, of course—there was a reduction in men from normal. Nobody was laid off. But as they retired, nobody took their place.

[02:58:32] **HOWARD:** Yeah, but the point I'm getting at it was more than simply sharing in the benefits of mechanization because you knew that your base in the longshore industry was going to gradually shrink as people were being replaced.

[02:58:43] **GERMAIN:** We knew that. We also recognized that if we had opposed it, we couldn't have won that battle. You would have not been able, no matter how strong, to stop the introduction of that kind of mechanization. Impossible. Could not stop it.

[02:59:02] **HOWARD:** Ok, the union's position was—some people have said, while that's true, the union seemed to have gone overboard. That they could have retained maybe manning schedules to some extent.

[02:59:12] **GERMAIN:** We had, but you couldn't justify it. You couldn't justify 18 men when 5 men could do the job. You couldn't justify that many.

[02:59:24] **HOWARD:** Could you fight for 10 men? As a compromise?

[02:59:26] **GERMAIN:** No, there's no—look, you've probably seen the operation.

[02:59:31] **HOWARD:** I actually haven't, no. I should.

[02:59:34] **GERMAIN:** Look, they bring this container on a flatbed truck. And it's hooked up. The ship is built so that you just slide it down. All the guys do is hook it. I mean, there's no work, physically.

[02:59:47] **HOWARD:** But the union always justified large gangs even during the forties and fifties.

[02:59:51] **GERMAIN:** The point is that you can't justify and hold—you can make do for a little while—but you can't justify having 20 men on a job that only takes 5. It just doesn't work out. You wouldn't, if you struck for it, if the employers locked you out, you couldn't get the support of the trade union movement behind it. It's just a loser, that's all. So we recognized it, and had to agree, to the employers' demand to introduction but provided no lay-offs and, on top of that, we got a big guarantee.

[03:00:24] **HOWARD:** Ok, the interesting thing about this issue to me is that if you compare the ILA's response to mechanization, they seem to have taken a more militant response.

[03:00:34] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, but the ILA's so goddamned crooked.

[03:00:36] **HOWARD:** Well, they are, but on this issue—

[03:00:38] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, they're still hanging on.

[03:00:41] **HOWARD:** I mean, for instance, you guys got compensation based on, what, tonnage? They got it on hours worked, which makes more sense. They have a 50-mile radius over which they claim jurisdiction. None on the west.

[03:00:55] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, but it doesn't work. It doesn't work everywhere, only in certain spots.

[03:00:58] **HOWARD:** That's probably true. But, still, they retained manning schedules, though.

[03:01:01] **GERMAIN:** Well, they maintained the gang schedules. But, on the other hand, we're ahead of them in many ways. We get better wages than they do.

[03:01:16] **HOWARD:** You do?

[03:01:17] **GERMAIN:** Oh yes. In the last agreement, we're about 25¢ per hour above them. On top of that, our pension agreement is much better. Our welfare agreement is much better, our welfare coverage.

[03:01:29] **HOWARD:** They have 60,000 longshoremen now, too.

[03:01:29] **GERMAIN:** But it goes to each man, and our pensions are much better.

[03:01:40] **HOWARD:** Oh, I—clearly, in my opinion, this is a superior union. It's democratic and everything else; there's no question.

[03:01:45] **GERMAIN:** We get along with the ILA. We confer with the ILA and all that. But there's so much crooked stuff going on in the ILA—

[03:01:55] **HOWARD:** I know.

[03:01:55] **GERMAIN:** —that we don't want to be a part of. Actually, you see, our wage guarantee is a good deal. [. . .] Our membership agreed that the introduction of the [?salting base?] , but we got certain things for it. For instance, the ILA guys didn't get any \$13,000. Or \$7,000. Nor did they get the sort of pensions we have. Our pension plan is much better than theirs. Also our pay guarantee is something they don't have. They may have a few more men than needed, but, in the overall, they're not as well off as we are.

[03:02:50] **HOWARD:** I think in some respects you guys came out better than they did. On the financial side of it, but in terms of working conditions and things like that, I don't know.

[03:02:57] **GERMAIN:** We have much better working conditions than they have. Much better.

[03:03:00] **HOWARD:** In 20 years from now, when there's 5 longshoremen on the West coast, what are you—

[03:03:03] **GERMAIN:** Well, they can't reduce much more. They're down to where mechanization is established. They've got it now.

[03:03:13] **HOWARD:** I've heard of totally computerized operations. They're talking about—

[03:03:16] **GERMAIN:** Oh yeah, they're improving onto—they've built one over here at Richmond [California] .

[03:03:20] **HOWARD:** Is that right?

[03:03:21] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, it's going to be push button.

[03:03:23] **HOWARD:** It takes things down to the dock on rails and stuff?

[03:03:26] **GERMAIN:** —be less men than the older operation. But, see, the main thing that we saw, at least it was accepted and understood—their job was secure. Nobody's going to be let go. If you're a longshoreman, you're there until retirement. No matter what the mechanization does. The employers have to pay the pay guarantee. A guy works two days this week, maybe one day next week, it doesn't matter. He gets his 36 hours paid for, and his pension is guaranteed. They just increased the pension, too. We're way ahead on pensions. Now the agreement we just reached, guys are going to get 30-years credit where they only had 25. In other words, you know, I had 40-odd years but I only got paid for 25. My pension's based on that. Now we've extended it an additional five years. Thirty years.

[03:04:37] **HOWARD:** Yeah, there's advances being made. I guess the question is how many longshoremen are left as a result?

[03:04:41] **GERMAIN:** Well, that is true. But the main thing is that nobody's been laid off. Nobody has lost a job, and, in some locals, they've increased membership.

[03:04:50] **HOWARD:** Really?

[03:04:50] **GERMAIN:** Oh yeah. They've increased membership in some of the northern locals. They're not big locals. They've increased membership in Sacramento, for instance.

[03:05:01] **HOWARD:** Are those mechanized ports, though?

[03:05:03] **GERMAIN:** Sure.

[03:05:04] **HOWARD:** Are they?

[03:05:04] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, they're mechanized. But they also have some bulk operations, like rice. What we've also been able to do now, we travel men. They get paid for travel time and subsistence. In other words, what happened in the past sometimes, when a port needed more men, they would hire casuals. Now they have to hire guys from the next nearest port, and there's a travel schedule worked out. For instance, Eureka [California] doesn't have a lot of work. So they can travel from Eureka up into Oregon or down to Sacramento, and the guys get paid for travelling. Stockton [California], for instance, has people coming in, travelling. San Francisco, of course, we transferred a lot of guys to other ports. Again, with the same idea, to give an opportunity for registered longshoremen to work, where the work is, and not hire outsiders. When an outsider is hired, there's no benefits paid into the pension fund or the welfare fund, which is paid whenever a registered longshoreman works, A or B, doesn't matter. Then they'd have to have another man, but, you know. Like Tacoma, for instance, they travel to Seattle or reverse. There's a lot of small ports.

[03:06:40] **HOWARD:** What's the current wage like? I have no idea if longshoremen vary by grades.

[03:06:44] **GERMAIN:** There's a basic grade, and then there are penalty grades. Like a winch driver will get 25¢ per hour more, and certain skills pay certain additional beyond. The rate was \$10.92. That's for the first six hours. It was increased with \$1.30 and it goes up to \$12.22.

[03:07:17] **HOWARD:** And they're guaranteed 36 hours per week minimum?

[03:07:21] **GERMAIN:** Yeah. Now, next July, this is a three-year agreement, there'll be another additional \$1.30 paid. It'll be \$13.50 total. Then on July '83, it'll be \$14.77. That's the basic rates.

[03:07:35] **HOWARD:** Wow, \$15 per hour.

[03:07:37] **GERMAIN:** That's for the first six hours. It's time-and-a-half—

[03:07:40] **HOWARD:** Time-and-a-half for the next two.

[03:07:42] **GERMAIN:** —beyond that, yeah.

[03:07:43] **HOWARD:** Most men get 36 hours/week anyway, right?

[03:07:46] **GERMAIN:** No, they don't. In San Francisco, there's quite a few that are, well, partly. They might work, say, two days this week. They work, say, they put in 16 hours.

[03:08:00] **HOWARD:** And they still qualify for the 32 hour?

[03:08:00] **GERMAIN:** No, they get the difference between that and 36 hours.

[03:08:08] **HOWARD:** Oh, they do anyway, right?

[03:08:09] **GERMAIN:** They're guaranteed 36 hours. Whatever time they work is naturally deducted from it, in other words. Then they get the difference between 36 hours and the hours they worked. So they're guaranteed that 36 hours, see. Of course, they got all their other improvements that have to do with specialty operations and so forth. And the pensions were increased, like I told you. So, the pensions, for those that retired prior to July '71, they got a \$25 increase this year, a \$25 increase next year, and the third year \$25 dollars. That's a \$75 increase per month, but spread over 3 years. They also increased the years of service credits. Up to now, it's only been up to 25 years, no matter how many years you had in. That paid accordingly. Now they've raised it to 25 years and there'll be an 18 percent increase to \$650, 26 years and so on, up to the 30-year credit at \$780.

[03:09:40] **HOWARD:** That sounds pretty good. Obviously there are impressive financial gains. There's no question about that.

[03:09:43] **GERMAIN:** Oh yeah.

[03:09:47] **HOWARD:** Well, let's see. The final source of questions I have we already talked about a little but I just want to sort of pull all together at this point. That is, why do you think that Bridges was as durable as he was? After all he was the only member of the expelled unions who was able to survive the Cold War period. The UE [United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America] barely survived, but—

[03:10:14] **GERMAIN:** I think basically that Harry, of course, has always been honest. He may not always have everybody agree with him, but he's got a lot of capability. He understands the problems. He's always been honest. In other words, they never found him trying to make any deals like captains in the ILA. And he's taken the issues to the rank and file, has not acted secretly or made deals there. The rank and file always knew where he stood. They may not always have always agreed with him, but it wasn't because they didn't trust him. They've always had faith in his position, that he meant to the better the condition of the worker. The methods sometimes they may not have agreed with, or something like that. Quite often didn't agree with his political position. But that didn't affect as far as the rank and file were concerned his leadership capabilities or his interest in seeing that the rank and file got the best conditions that were available under the circumstances. Disagreement is one thing, but they recognized the difference between his leadership and that of the ILA, where it's run by racketeers and it's known. There's not much rank and file can do about it or is able to. Although we get along with them, we meet with them, and discuss things with them. We have a friendly relationship. But we don't necessarily follow their policies. They don't have the democracy that we have.

[03:12:10] **HOWARD:** I don't know a union that does, actually.

[03:12:12] **GERMAIN:** Very few. In our union, you can get up and speak your piece, and you don't have to worry when you go outside, you're going to get dumped.

[03:12:19] **HOWARD:** That's right.

[03:12:21] **GERMAIN:** You may not agree with the guy. Lots of times you don't. There've been some hot and heavy debates and all that.

[03:12:27] **HOWARD:** You think the ILWU is unique, not only in democracy, but in the degree to which it accepts sort of leftist politics in leadership?

[03:12:40] **GERMAIN:** I think that's probably true because we never disagree or react adversely to a person because his politics are this, that, or the other thing. As far as religion's concerned, it never enters the picture.

Of course it's always been whatever's best for the rank and file, whatever's best for the survival of the union. Make it as secure as you can, considering all the circumstances.

Now, for instance, the '71 strike should never have happened. We didn't make anything of the '71 strike. No advances. We didn't lose anything, but we did not gain what we should have, where, in '48, we made great advances. Matter of fact, the employers changed all their leadership. The general feeling of the rank and file—I sat in on the negotiations and I sat in on the caucuses that followed—sure, there were some that felt that the negotiating committee hadn't done what they hoped they would. There was opposition, although it carried overwhelmingly. It carried narrowly in 10, by less than 100 votes.

[03:14:14] **HOWARD:** In Local 10?

[03:14:14] **GERMAIN:** Yeah.

[03:14:15] **HOWARD:** Is that right? This was the recent contract?

[03:14:25] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, the last one. It carried pretty well in [San] Pedro. I don't happen to have a pen, but I'll have it for you. But Seattle, it carried not overwhelmingly either, but it carried. In other words, there was not one local that voted it down. Many were unanimous. But, generally speaking, the four big locals pretty much—they're the largest group. Some of the smaller locals were unanimous. Here and there, you had one or two that voted no. Ten, I think, had the largest no vote, although not the majority. It has to do with the local situation.

I know what it is—it's this: when the mechanization started, we had to agree because it made sense to have the employer-paid men to handle this equipment. You can just have a guy out there—I mean, they had to train them, and they paid the guys. Trained them. So we had to allow these guys to work steady for that employer.

[03:15:43] **HOWARD:** Why did that follow?

[03:15:44] **GERMAIN:** Well, because you couldn't get another guy who isn't trained to go there.

[03:15:48] **HOWARD:** Couldn't you have a pool of trained men? And have them dispatched from the hall?

[03:15:51] **GERMAIN:** We did. We have done that. But over the years . . . the real problem is this: the special equipment operators, they're called—

[03:16:01] **HOWARD:** This is the 9.43 men [refers to clause 9.43 of the contract that deals with steady employees, or workers employed directly by the stevedoring companies] , right?

[03:16:03] **GERMAIN:** Yes, yes. They came in under Section 9.43. He's guaranteed 176 hours a month. What happened is this: that employer doesn't always need him all that time. May be a week that he doesn't need him. He has the right to come into the hiring hall and get a job. He's not taking a job away from anybody, but, if no one else is available and they need his training, his abilities, he can go to work. So actually he's making more money than the guy that doesn't want to go steady, and is a specialty equipment operator, trained, you know. This was causing the most trouble in San Francisco. That the steady men, as they're called, the 9.43 men, were getting jobs out of the hiring hall on top of their guarantee.

[03:17:00] **HOWARD:** That seems to go against the grain of the union, does it? All the things it stood for?

[03:17:02] **GERMAIN:** Well, it does. In this agreement, the employers are going to train sufficient men. Also the guys that work steady will be able to work steady for two weeks and then they'll come back in the hall. A rotating system.

[03:17:20] **HOWARD:** So they won't be steady men anymore then, really.

[03:17:22] **GERMAIN:** They can go back to the employer, but they have to take their chances in the hiring hall, same as those who are not working steady. They'll become non-steady for two weeks.

[03:17:32] **HOWARD:** Oh, every other two weeks, they have to be non-steady?

[03:17:34] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, yeah.

[03:17:34] **HOWARD:** So they can go work for Matson for two weeks as a steady worker, come back to the hall—

[03:17:37] **GERMAIN:** No, it's a month. That's it, a month.

[03:17:37] **HOWARD:** A month, and then a month of non-steady work.

[03:17:44] **GERMAIN:** They rotate around.

[03:17:45] **HOWARD:** And then they go back.

[03:17:46] **GERMAIN:** Yeah. Then they go back.

[03:17:48] **HOWARD:** I can see why they compromised.

[03:17:49] **GERMAIN:** What will happen, we think, is that there'll be less men working steady. There'll be no point to it.

[03:17:58] **HOWARD:** Why is that?

[03:17:59] **GERMAIN:** Well, look. If you work steady, you had the advantage of having an extra job. If there's enough men trained, there won't be any extra jobs available. In other words, let's say they need 500 trained men. I don't know how many there are, but let's say they need 500. If you have 500, then half of them will come out of the hall, and half will work steady. It's going to even itself out. This is the main breakthrough on this thing.

[03:18:26] **HOWARD:** That sounds like a good thing.

[03:18:30] **GERMAIN:** What the guys voted against in Local 10, I think it wasn't explained clearly, is this system of rotating and additional men being trained. We found also that employer corrected, is that they didn't put in the proper orders. Didn't have enough men. They agreed that that was wrong and they need to correct that. We'll see how it works out.

[03:18:59] **HOWARD:** The last few questions really regard the base for Bridges within the union specifically according to different factors. Like my reading suggests that the so-called '34 men were the most loyal supporters of Bridges in the union. Is that true or not?

[03:19:19] **GERMAIN:** I think the loyalty is still there. That's quite obvious when he shows up to the meeting.

[03:19:31] **HOWARD:** You don't see any generational basis to his support then?

[03:19:33] **GERMAIN:** No, of course Harry's retired now. He doesn't stick his nose into—

[03:19:37] **HOWARD:** I guess really I'm thinking back into the fifties. If you can put yourself back in there, that's really the period that I'm looking at for this sort of stuff.

[03:19:43] **GERMAIN:** There's never been a lack of loyalty to Harry. There may have been times if they didn't agree, but, the way we operate, in the long run it's the rank and file that makes the decision.

[03:19:58] **HOWARD:** Yeah, I'm aware of that. All I'm trying to get at is what groups among the rank and file were most likely to support him versus those which weren't.

Let me tell you my image of it, the way I would see it. The ones who would be most likely to support bridges would be Blacks, would be the '34 men, would be the Hawaiians, several of the warehouse districts, and the fishermen. Does that—

[03:20:25] **GERMAIN:** I couldn't agree with that. I don't think that's correct. The support to Harry has always been based first upon the fact that he always told the guys exactly what the situation was like, what could be expected, what was available, or could be had.

Also, of course, we hadn't had many strikes. We had an unwritten rule—it's an unwritten rule—if the negotiating committee does, including of course the officers, if they do recommend a strike, it's with the understanding that we must have an 85 [percent] yes vote. If we didn't, they wouldn't have called the strike. They'd call another convention or a caucus or whatever. Because you're going to have people affected, you start out with 85 [percent] , but after about—because when we go on strike, it's generally for three months—they don't get hurt the first couple of months. But then it starts to hurt them, and then they start speaking things up [sic] . The unity gets weaker. So we've always—if you can't get at least 85 percent of the members to say strike, then we wouldn't strike. Or with the committee.

In this last session, it was quite obvious to every one of the committee, there was no real strike issue. There was no issue on which we felt the rank and file would go for a strike. Not one issue. So therefore we recognized, and the employers recognized it, too. But, on the other hand, the employers didn't want to find themselves in a position where, by a slight majority, the committee recommend that they adopt their recommendation. They had a unanimous recommendation, by the way. Although some weren't happy this or that wasn't agreed to. The employer wouldn't want a position where the rank and would go to [inaudible] _____, and not upset the agreement. Because then they're really in a bad position because it could then result into a strike. Would not be a good issue, but it could be.

The employers know, no matter what happens, they don't make money when the guys are on strike. We don't either, but they're looking at the almighty profit item all the time. I noticed that in these negotiations, too, well they were tough at first. "I don't know how . . . You couldn't . . . That wouldn't work . . ." You know. That sort of thing. They eventually had to start bending, start giving. Of course we dropped some things we knew we couldn't get, for instance COLA [Cost of Living Allowance] . A big demand. Well, we dropped two-thirds of it the moment of July first. We realized it wasn't there. Everything else being acceptable, we're not going to call a strike to get COLA, you see? It just doesn't make sense. You wouldn't get support of the membership on it. Once they saw that they were getting wages and benefits, all the things that they want, they wouldn't go on strike just to get COLA.

[03:23:39] **HOWARD:** Do you think the longshoremen are a different breed today than they were 30 years ago?

[03:23:43] **GERMAIN:** Oh yes.

[03:23:44] **HOWARD:** In what way?

[03:23:46] **GERMAIN:** Well—

[03:23:47] **HOWARD:** Other than wealthier.

[03:23:49] **GERMAIN:** I'll tell you, and it's a sad thing to say, but they're doing so well that they don't want to take a chance. They're self-satisfied.

[03:24:01] **HOWARD:** Bridges said the same thing about mechanization agreements.

[03:24:06] **GERMAIN:** It's true. When you think of the guarantees they got—they got a guaranteed wage for god's sakes; they got good medical coverage. Good pension agreement. They're not going to gamble losing some of these things because maybe they wanted something, not the important things, you know. I don't think they'd really go out on strike to resolve that, with members enough that it's palatable, let's say. After all, those who went through the seventies strike is about all. There's a lot of them have never really been out on a strike. They've been brought in and everything's so plentiful. Never had the long hours, the bad conditions. Sure, the guys that have retired know that. But other younger people don't.

[03:25:04] **HOWARD:** It's ironic—the union almost seems to be a victim of its own success.

[03:25:08] **GERMAIN:** It is sometimes. But, no, when the chips are down, the guys would be there alright. But it would have to be a real issue, an issue where the union's going to live or die—they'll be out there. One hundred percent. They know enough to know that without the union it'd be very difficult. I'm not saying it's perfect by any means, but it's pretty safe for them under the circumstances. Whether it will be three years from now, nobody knows.

[03:25:43] **HOWARD:** Change fast. Well, that's all the questions I had, actually. The only other things I wanted to ask you about is if you could recommend anyone else that I could maybe interview.

[03:25:55] **GERMAIN:** Trouble is that most of the guys that would be worth interviewing don't live in this city. I don't know where they are, many of the retired guys. They're scattered. I was thinking of Henry Schmidt; he lives in Sonoma [California]. The guy's been sick.

[03:26:12] **HOWARD:** Is that right?

[03:26:13] **GERMAIN:** Uh-huh, well, he's recovering. He would be worthwhile, but in his condition I wouldn't recommend it. Otherwise, I can't think of anybody that is immediately available around here. I don't know. So many of the guys are gone. The only guy I can think of is Henry Schmidt, who was president and through the mill, but, as I say, he had an operation. Prostate gland. He never missed a pensioners' meeting; he hasn't been to a meeting. I call him once in a while. He tries keep advised of what goes on, but he's about the only guy that has the background and the knowledge from the time we started. The rest of them, I can't think of anybody that's available here. Because so many of them have moved out from the area. They're scattered all around. I don't know where the hell they are. They come to me. Some of them live 30-40 miles away.

[03:27:49] **HOWARD:** You wouldn't be having a meeting within the next three weeks, would you?

[03:27:51] **GERMAIN:** We're having our regular pensioners' meeting on the second Tuesday of each month.

[03:28:00] **HOWARD:** Could I possibly attend that and see the people that show up? Or is that . . . ?

[03:28:05] **GERMAIN:** I'll tell you what you should do. You should go down to Local 10 and go into the Pensioners' section. See the president of the Pensioners. His name is Robert Rohath.

[03:28:20] **HOWARD:** Rohath?

[03:28:47] **GERMAIN:** Yeah. R-O-H-A-T-H. He's the president of the local pensioners' club, and the secretary is Mike Samaduroff.

[03:28:48] **HOWARD:** Spell that?

[03:28:48] **GERMAIN:** S-A-M-A-D-O-R-F-F, I think.

[03:28:49] **HOWARD:** Samadoor-aahff.

[03:28:50] **GERMAIN:** -duroff, D-U.

[03:28:54] **HOWARD:** Samador-off.

[03:28:57] **GERMAIN:** Yeah. He's an old-timer.

[03:29:05] **HOWARD:** They have a section within the Local 10 building?

[03:29:07] **GERMAIN:** I'll tell you. They're upstairs. The administration building. Faces east.

[03:29:15] **HOWARD:** I've never been down there, so . . .

[03:29:17] **GERMAIN:** Can't miss it. The hiring hall's a great big building with a big sign, you can't miss it. It's on Bay Street, the foot of Taylor, I think it's. You know, there's a big sign on the door. But you go upstairs; it's on the second floor. There's a little office there. You can tell them that you talked with me and ask them if it's possible for you to sit in the meeting. I'm sure they wouldn't object.

[03:29:49] **HOWARD:** So that would be—

[03:29:51] **GERMAIN:** Second Tuesday.

[03:29:51] **HOWARD:** —next Tuesday, correct?

[03:29:52] **GERMAIN:** I guess it is, yeah. The meeting starts generally at noon.

[03:29:59] **HOWARD:** It's Friday, I won't even—well, I guess I can go down there on Tuesday. That'd be the best I could do because Monday it'll be closed.

[03:30:04] **GERMAIN:** Yeah, I guess it would be closed. Yeah, Labor Day they'll be closed. No, wait a minute, I'm getting mixed up. It's the second Wednesday.

[03:30:15] **HOWARD:** Oh.

[03:30:16] **GERMAIN:** The third Tuesday is when the executive board meets.

[03:30:19] **HOWARD:** Ok, that makes it better.

[03:30:20] **GERMAIN:** The second Wednesday. Which would be the eighth.

[03:30:24] **HOWARD:** Yeah, I'd have to look it up. Eighth or ninth. Must be the ninth because I'm meeting somebody on the tenth, and that's Thursday.

[GERMAIN MOVES FROM MICROPHONE TO CHECK THE DATES.]

[03:30:42] **GERMAIN:** That's right, the ninth.

[03:30:49] **HOWARD:** Ok, that's good.

[03:30:51] **GERMAIN:** But you can go up there before that and tell—

[03:30:56] **HOWARD:** Either Robert Rohatch or Mike Samaduroff.

[03:31:00] **GERMAIN:** Better if you can talk with Rohatch. If he isn't there, you can talk—there's also a nice guy there named Harley Croft. They're there from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m., I think. They're not there in the afternoon because they go out and visit sick members, one thing or another. Their office is open from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m.

[03:31:28] **HOWARD:** Ok, the final question I have regarding contacts is, did you think it's worthwhile to approach Bridges?

[03:31:35] **GERMAIN:** You can approach him, but I doubt very much—look, I can't tell you what he'd do or say. Try it, but . . . I guess he'd been interviewed so often, so much, maybe—I can't say what his reaction would be.

[03:31:51] **HOWARD:** I know.

[03:31:53] **GERMAIN:** Try it, but I don't know.

[03:31:55] **HOWARD:** Any approach that would work better than any other, or do you have any idea?

[03:31:59] **GERMAIN:** No. He's unpredictable in that sense. I heard that he has an unlisted phone because he's bothered too much. I realize now that he has had too much of that, I guess.

[03:32:13] **HOWARD:** Yeah, I can understand it.

[03:32:18] **GERMAIN:** That's only as far as I know. I don't even have his phone number. Of course, he's changed a number of times, I don't have it.

[03:32:24] **HOWARD:** Is that right?

[03:32:24] **GERMAIN:** Just if you know him. I guess, you know, screwballs sometimes get bothering him. He was going to—

[END PART SEVEN]